IPHIGENIA AT MIDNIGHT

Ash and Gold

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IPHIGENIA AT MIDNIGHT

A three-mission narrative for *Lancer*, starting at License Level 6
Version 0.5.0

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INTRODUCTION

It is five hundred years after the fall of the Second Committee of Union–an authoritarian, monocultural hegemon who brought their ideology to the stars by warship and rifle–and the rise of the Third in its place from the fires of revolution. The dream of utopia is a work in progress across much of Union, with corpro-states and tyrants in the far-flung Diaspora seeking to maintain their power outside of Union's sight. During the Revolution that toppled the Second Committee, a group of three prosperous planets seceded from Union entirely: the Choral Worlds, with their former Administrator as their monarch. However, vengeance arrives centuries late: a Second Committee reprisal fleet fully armed for their planet-killing mission. Patrae burns under the auspices of the flagship's shipmistress, Iphigenia, and the fleet splits to do the same to Lebaea and Coroneia. Only a small handful of chassis pilots, pulled from every combat-capable element and hastily pushed into the void, now stand between the ghost of an empire long gone and the end of more than ten billion lives.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

Iphigenia at Midnight uses NPC content from the LANCER Core Rulebook by Massif Press, as well as the Massif-published modules *No Room for a Wallflower: Act 1*, *Dustgrave*, and *Operation Winter Scar*. Optional hardsuit combats and some narrative rules utilize the system of Stress established in the first-party *Field Guide to the Karrakin Trade Baronies*, also published by Massif Press.

THEMES AND SAFETY

Iphigenia at Midnight, as a result of its subject matter, deals with heavy and dark themes routinely as fundamental aspects of storytelling and plot. It is highly recommended to run a "session zero" where details on these are made available to your players (albeit without spoilers) and information on their "do not cross" lines can be gathered to ensure player safety; safety tools should also be made available for your players throughout the campaign and discussed in Session Zero, such as the X Card by John Stavropoulos and the Lines and Veils system by Ron Edwards. At no point should the plot or storytelling of this module take priority over a player's enjoyment, health, or safety.
In this module, themes which may be distressing to players include:

- Discussion and depiction of genocide
- Execution of surrendering opponents
- Attacks on civilian populations
- Oppression, terrorism, authoritarianism
- Intimidation, browbeating, manipulation
- Mass industrial warfare and death
- Implicit and explicit bigotry, xenophobia, and devaluation of life and individual merit

As well, Iphigenia herself strongly features themes of abuse (both of her in her backstory and abuse directed towards player characters), cycles of violence, suicidal ideation, guilt, grief, and dissociation.

In the final accounting, *Iphigenia at Midnight* is a story which focuses on how the consequences of authoritarianism ripple out through history – how the damage that imperial and colonial structures cause can last for generations, and how it affects those subject to it whether or not they serve the very machine which seeks to devour them. It is concerned with, ultimately, direct action and violence both perpetuated by an authoritarian regime and used to defend against that regime's depredations, and exists as a narrative in dialogue with concepts of total war, revolution, and genocide at levels ranging from physical mass murder to cultural and social erasure. These components of the narrative should not be treated lightly, and their effects on players – as well as on the GM responsible for portraying such antagonists – should be considered and kept in the forefront of one's mind.

There is no shame in needing to take a step back from horror in fiction, should it be necessary – it is your characters, not you personally, which must take up arms to destroy it.

DISCLAIMER ON COMBAT DIFFICULTY

The missions presented are tuned to be difficult for the average player, and substantiate the narrative of this being a near-suicide mission for those sacrificing their lives to stop the Second Committee. For experienced players, or if **Scene 1-1** and **Scene 1-2** have been overly easy for your group, you may create a harder experience by adding in the NPCs and/or optionals that have been underlined in red.

OPTIONAL HIGH-MORTALITY RULES

To further emphasize the themes of the struggle against Iphigenia's forces as a highly lethal, uphill battle even for the most skilled pilots, players may opt-in to these high-mortality rules for their characters during the campaign. **These should not automatically be applied party-wide, and should be based upon explicit and withdrawable player consent out of character;** the same applies for how the Second Committee's forces behave in combat during the module, such as executing instead of capturing downed pilots or routinely aiming for cockpit shots instead of attempts to disable, which may be avoided in the case of the player characters

OPTIONAL HIGH-MORTALITY RULES

but applied to NPCs in the background or during narrative.

Under these rules, if a mech is destroyed without the pilot being outside of the chassis (e.g., by ejecting beforehand), roll **1d10** plus the chassis' remaining structure; if the roll is a **5 or less**, the pilot is killed or critically injured in the event. Otherwise, they are merely severely injured. If the mech melts down without the pilot being outside of the chassis, the pilot is killed every time.

If the pilot dies, their player should immediately re-roll a new one at the same license level; they will be introduced before next combat with **6/5/4** points split between structure and stress (dependent on combat; e.g., if joining into the second combat, **3/3**, if joining into the third, **3/2 or 2/3**...) Grease Monkey 3 may not be used to affect this, but Repairs may be spent as if in a short rest. Additionally, subtract **1/2/3** uses from all Limited systems and weapons (to a limit of 0). Typically, this new character will be another member of the all-out assault on Iphigenia's fleet, simply happening upon the party by luck or happenstance, rescued from bad circumstances, or similar.

THE CHORAL WORLDS

Centered around the yellow Type G main-sequence star of Choral, the Choral Worlds are a three-planet system in the Altai Line seeded with human colonists by a Second Committee mission in the early days of their mass expansion program, approximately 3271u. The first arrivals were Union Colonial Mission survey teams; after they evaluated each planet in the system for habitability, later arrivals consisted of mass conveyor after mass conveyor of civilians. Initial waves carried engineers, administrators, farmers, and other necessary personnel in order to kickstart the growth of Lebaea into a suitable member of the Second Committee's hegemon – only later did immigration from Core worlds and the expansion of families extant in the system provide for the growth of a vibrant local culture, though this soon ran up against the edges of what Union permitted at the time in terms of deviance from the "Cradelian ideal" which anthrochauvinist philosophy promoted. However, for a time, the Choral Worlds were productive and boasted a high quality of living, even if – like many systems under the yoke of the Second Committee – they could not truly be said to be "happy" after more than a thousand years of continued rule from distant Cradle. When it came to the worlds themselves, however, it all began with the first planet to know the touch of Union.

CHORAL NAMING SCHEMES

The dominant naming scheme (and some elements of culture, such as food and styles of clothing) across the Choral Worlds originates from Lebaea during its original Second Committee colonization, and is a mixture of Northern and Western European influences, with an emphasis on elements drawn from Scandinavian, Danish, and Austrian in upper-class families, with Northern United Kingdom elements more common amongst the working class (notably, the Erwood monarchy's name is drawn from Welsh). Many families on Patrae and groups derived from them on the other worlds take influence from Spanish and Basque names, while on Coroneia, some groups (typically descended from veterans and immigrant factory metallurgists during the SecComm era) draw on Moroccan and Algerian heritage.

Choral I (Lebaea) is the capital of the system and the first world to be scouted by the UCM, a highly habitable Cradle-like planet known for the vast and temperate forests spanning its four continents. Local government was centered on the metropolis of Praetorian's Rest, a port city that straddled the two great oceans of Lebaea and was built radiating outwards from the obelisk marking the first step taken on the planet's surface. In the days of the Second Committee, that government was made up of the Union Auxiliary Forces command for the system, the local detachment of the Council of Military Commissars, and the colonial Administrator's office. Other settlements on the planet were first formed around prominent logging, fishing, geothermal tapping, and mining sites, but soon grew into stable and prosperous cities of their own. Over time, one of the most prominent – and repressed – forms of art on the planet was practiced at sites far from the cities: natural rock formations which caught the high winds that whipped around Lebaea's equator and formed organic tones and melodies. Those inspired by this natural music would not only be responsible for naming the Choral Worlds, but their work would go on to be secretly produced throughout the Second Committee's rule of the system. Such music tends to be characterized by high, ethereal tones and the use of almost exclusively string and woodwind instruments.

Choral II (Coroneia), on the other hand, is a desert world close to the system's sun primarily used for industrial purposes and the generation of solar power. Little natural beauty except that found in austerity could be seen on Coroneia, and the Second Committee's need for industrial output soon stripped away even that to burrow mines, industrial plants, and power generation arrays into the planet's surface. Especially due to its closeness to Choral itself, most non-subaltern habitation was underground, leaving natives of the world paler and shorter than those who kept to the "traditionally Cradelian" environment of Lebaea. The microwave beam arrays and Dyson panels maintained on Coroneia supply some degree of power to the rest

of the system as well as fueling the industrial machine on the planet, which – at its height during the Second Committee – could reportedly manufacture enough medium tanks for multiple armored battalions in a single day. Coroneia's capacity was also a carrot dangled over the heads of the populace by the Second Committee, as a promise that – were they to finally remove any last traces of ideological deviancy – it would be possible to build a blinkgate in-system and cut short the multiple-year journeys to and from the nearest gate at the time.

Those journeys were made on the products of *Choral III (Patrae)* – a blue-green gas giant hosting chemical refinery and shipbuilding facilities as well as orbital habitats. Fuel, weapon propellant, lasing material, and more were created from mining the planet itself, while the dockyards above produced vessels up to carrier tonnage for the Union Navy as well as patrol sublines for the system Auxiliaries. Inhabitants of Patrae tended to be willowy and tall due to the low gravity, as well as broadly darker-skinned due to radiation exposure in orbit. As well, many of those inhabitants went on to become members of the Union Navy, such as Admiral Hiram Azul (born on Orbital Delta-4A) and his storied career as commander of the SCS-BB *Dawnbreak*. Notably, Patrae also possessed biodiversity of its own in the form of hydrogen-breathing, pressure-habituated animals somewhat like manta rays within the gas giant's outer layers, examples of which would occasionally be hunted from the mining rigs as a rite of passage.

When the Revolution came, however, it also came to all three of the Choral Worlds. A brief and vicious civil war erupted between loyalist and rebel factions, including a series of skirmishes in the space between Lebaea and Coroneia that destroyed the Union battlegroup which had previously been stationed in the system. The rebel group, however, had originated within the Union government on Lebaea – long dissatisfied with what they perceived to be the Second Committee's undue tithes, expansion and industrial schedule, and lack of representation and meaningful progress towards a system blinkgate – and worse disasters were avoided by maintaining tight control of strategic weapons stockpiles. With control of these stockpiles and the direct reins of surviving government, the current UCM Administrator in charge of the Choral Worlds – Catherine Erwood – appointed herself the head of a new secessionist monarchy in 4562u. Thus did the Choral Worlds exit the Revolution as a fiercely isolationist, independent polity outside Union's auspices, under the (supposedly) benevolent rule of Queen Catherine I.

Such a declaration incurred the inevitable Second Committee response of a Navy reprisal fleet, though with the Revolution rapidly growing into a vast conflagration, no such fleet ever arrived. Instead, the nascent Third Committee quickly granted the Choral Worlds a writ of independence after the conclusion of the Revolution and moved on with settling their own accounts and cleaning up remaining loyalist holdouts; though the Choral government under Catherine I and her immediate descendants would remain strongly anthrochauvinist, it had no pretensions to the title of Union or the seat of Cradle, and instead toyed with a divergent breed of anthrochauvinism resting on the concept of "the survival of the cultural human legacy" (Preservationism, in academic shorthand). Under the new system, members of the political class which allowed "direct rule from Cradle" were given noble titles to legitimize their function without the force of the Second Committee, and political power was re-envisioned as flowing from the Royal Throne instead of from a far-distant ruler.

THE DIASPORA AND OPPRESSION UNDER THE SECOND COMMITTEE

From an objective standard, the Second Committee routinely committed acts of quiet cultural genocide out of hand and was intensely repressive, exerting top-down control from Cradle over everything from the local political system to the military to acceptable forms of cultural expression via grey-suited Union Colonial Mission administrators and the heavy boots of federal Marines. This must be understood as the foundation of any further discussion: Union during the Second Committee era was an authoritarian, oppressive state wholly dedicated to an ideology with cultural erasure as one of its primary tenets.

But: Oppression doesn't just happen for its own sake.

SecComm was one of the most stable, longest-lasting empires in human history – definitively the largest and, depending on how one accounts for the continuity of certain thrones, the most long-lived. The innovations it brought in its push towards post-scarcity, brought on by the development of blink-tech and paracausal science, ranged from the means to reliably connect worlds that would've taken decades to traverse even at nearlight speeds, to matter-constructive printers comparable in capability to and more flexible than some dedicated production lines.

The story of the Second Committee's repression in the Diaspora is not of evil for its own ends: it's of evil because it's so convinced of its own righteousness it won't *let* you disagree. It's a slow smothering, a generational process of losing what you were to become more like them – a flattening, a reduction, one single People spread out across the breadth of the Orion Arm, with the same magazines in every news-stand, the same icons in every church, and the same soldiers on every street-corner.

THE DIASPORA AND OPPRESSION UNDER THE SECOND COMMITTEE

After four hundred years of being ruled in that manner, for the Diaspora, such a thing may seem less evil to them, and more just how life is lived. You've never known anything different. Your parents haven't. Nor their parents. Possibly, maybe, your great-grandparents would remember a time before Mother Cradle smothered to death everything that made them *different* for the comfort of *the same*, but are they even still alive to talk about it?

Possibly. And it's possibly because of Union's medical innovations and life-extension technology. The Revolution, of course, is a different story. And that galactic paroxysm of desperate violence is what characterizes the end of all authoritarian states: bitter, bloody, and devastating.

Before it, acts of resistance against the Second Committee's regime took simple guises – even just as small as teaching your daughter your own language instead of Union's, or worshipping your own god instead of those pre-approved and exported from Cradle. It is the hopes of those people upon seeing the giant stumble that catalyzed the Revolution into being, and brought down Union as it was to forge it into the Union of the now.

Over the course of the next five hundred years, a steady ideological slide away from anthrochauvinism and towards a preference for democratic and communal government led towards the workers' groups on Coroneia and Patrae spreading the idea of government-through-commune across the Choral Worlds. Given the strength of the working class as an ideological block in the system since the Second Committee days and their policies of the Trinity – Industry, Science, Military – such grew into a pervasive public sentiment and subject of agitation (covertly aided by Third Committee Union Intelligence Bureau missions) over the course of decades of organization and attempted government crackdowns. As a result, the Great Queen – Henriette I – willingly chose to relegate her and her dynasty to the status of figurehead royalty after about three hundred and eighty years of rule. To replace the powers she once wielded (beyond the Benevolent Royal acting as a traditional tiebreaker and educated voice of advice) and aid in the dismantlement of the system of administrator-nobility by which the Choral government functioned, the People's Parliament arose, containing several hundred representatives elected by each of the various commune councils across the Choral Worlds in order to represent whatever interests pertained to the Worlds collectively. This transition is still in living memory (74 years as of the time of the module), and common sentiment is mixed on whether the Great Queen was indeed acting selflessly in acquiescing to decades of community organization or was making a shrewd geopolitical judgement on her ability to prop up the rule of an increasingly unpopular absolute monarchy and its noble holdings across the void of interplanetary space. On Lebaea, many of the older individuals who remember the ten-year Transitionary Period still consider it with resentment due to the immense difficulty and turmoil of the process, while the Great Queen's decision to relinquish her power is celebrated by many of the same age on Coroneia and Patrae, who view it as a choice which allowed a peaceful transition instead of the direct action some more militant groups of the monarchical period had begun to advocate.

Into the gap after the Transitionary Period, however, entered Harrison Armory. Seeing a vibrant, industrialized and capable set of worlds in political turmoil as a centuries-old monarchical system was finally overturned and replaced with an entirely new – and exceptionally complex on an interplanetary scale – form of government, representatives of the Armory began the long and slow process of enticing the Choral Worlds to become part of the Purview. At first, they met substantial resistance, but over time certain of the Worlds became more inclined towards Purview membership – such as, notably, Patrae, whose shipbuilding capabilities made them the focus of most of the Armory's soft power and propaganda leverage. The process only began tilting notably pro-Purview in the past ten years due to a spate of violent pirate and terrorist attacks in the local region, which Armory Colonial Legion forces and contracted mercenaries worked with the Choral Defense Forces in order to put down. Theories abounded as to whether the Armory could have engaged other mercenaries or extant pirate groups to perform such attacks in order to sway public opinion towards needing the Purview's net of support, but nevertheless, a referendum in 5013u (the third of its kind spread over several decades) voted to begin the provisional process to become part of the Purview.

Union more broadly, however, lent far more credence to these rumors – especially since the Central Committee was technically still bound by the terms of the Treaty of Independence signed so many years ago. Thus, Union dispatched an observation and investigation team on the UNS-LS *Okhotsk* (a *Caspian Sea*-class frigate, modified for a complement of mechanized chassis) to monitor the situation.

However, Harrison Armory has deployed the PCV-GC *Enyo* (a *Farragut*-class gun-armed carrier) to maintain their presence and force projection in the region, along with deployed personnel of the Legion IV *Myrkviðr* "Serpent's Teeth" and their own chassis. At the beginning of this module, the Union and Armory warships are currently in a tense holding arrangement over Coroneia so neither create the appearance of intimidating the People's Parliament on Lebaea. After Union completes their investigation into allegations of misconduct and false-flag involvement around the

referendum, that body may yet be required to decide with the benefit of new evidence whether to continue their integration process into the Purview, join Union separately from the Armory, or remain an independent polity.

WHO ARE YOU? – THE CHORAL COALITION

Players may choose to hail from one of four groups, hooks and additional details for which are discussed below. Characters may individually be part of any of these groups, pulled together for the extraordinary circumstances of the module somehow, or the party as a whole may choose to hail from the same group. If none of these hooks appeal to you, feel free to work with your group in order to create a more appealing scenario, such as if you're using *Iphigenia at Midnight* as part of a broader campaign. Begin the campaign on or above Lebaea, with a group of Lancers possessing reasonable motivation to get involved with the module's central problem of impending apocalypse.

ARMORY LEGIONNAIRES

Whether part of the Legion IV *Myrkviðr* (pronunciation: *meerk-whither*, roughly) or other detachments of the Purview armed forces in support of the Armory's integration efforts, Legion forces have been fighting alongside the CDF for the past ten years, as well as guarding Armory technicians and engineers soliciting the Choral Worlds with logistical and technology exchange programs. As of 5016u, the PCV-GC *Enyo* has been on station for three of those years, commanded by ***Group Captain Akemi Hiroyama*** *(she/they)*. Local Legion forces as a whole are under the supervision of ***Legion Major Conall Hawthorn*** *(he/him).*

Group Captain Hiroyama is known to be strongly in support of continued military intervention and involvement in the Choral Worlds, while Major Hawthorn is significantly more cautious. Some personnel whisper that this is due to his last deployment, which reportedly went bad and resulted in a full Armory deployment necessary to crush a local rebellion – something that represented a significant black eye for the Major's career. While Group Captain Hiroyama is riding high off of a series of successes in the Dawnline Shore, the Choral deployment is Major Hawthorn's chance at redemption in the eyes of the Purview.

Overall, however, the Armory detachment is strongly invested in winning the Choral Worlds over to the Purview, and has concentrated most of its expeditionary force around Patrae. At the start of the module, these have been catastrophically mauled and harassed during their long retreat to Lebaea, and bring back firsthand evidence of the capabilities of the hostile battlefleet. Some survivors may be eager to get back into the fight, while others may not be at all – notably, the members of the Legion IV *Myrkviðr* tend to the former as a result of that tundra world's culture of military pride and Purview honor, with many pilots seeing it as their personal responsibility to raise the crimson banner and avenge their dead comrades-in-arms. The wide plains, deep forests, and open skies of their home cultivate a hardy breed, especially when the snows lie deep across the planet for three-quarters of their long years; it is after the World Serpent that holds up this forbidding orb and its aspects that they tattoo themselves at coming of age and name their formations at war. This conflict is but the latest of the capricious twistings of the Serpent as it writhes in its slumber.

The local Armory detachment primarily operates HA *Sherman*, *Saladin*, *Napoleon*, *Iskander*, and *Genghis* chassis fitted for counter-insurgency roles.

UNION NAVY

The UNS-LS *Okhotsk*, commanded by ***Captain Gabriel Delgado*** *(he/him)*, only recently arrived to the Choral Worlds in 5015u after its long transit from the nearest blinkgate. Its main guns have been stripped back to host an expanded hangar bay and intelligence annex, which respectively host detachments of Union Marines and Auxiliary mixed chassis in event of a worst-case scenario (most notably the Union Marines 600th Battalion 1st Squadron, "Dark and Stormy") and some of Union Naval Intelligence's best and brightest, as well as legal and investigative minds from the Union Administrative Department. Captain Delgado's mission is strictly observational: Union is not to get involved with Choral's government or with military operations in the region, but is to effect all appropriate aid in service of the civilians carrying out their oversight and investigation mission into the 5013u referendum. So far, the strictness of those rules of engagement has chafed at many in the Union detachment, though Captain Delgado's hands-on style of command has kept a tight leash on his pilots and Marines for the time being.

On paper, the Union position on the Choral Worlds is simply to honor the terms of the original Treaty of Independence – and thus "support the right of self-determination and personal destiny of the Choral Worlds". In practice, however, this is also one of the main justifications being used for any potential Union military intervention in the region: if the system is indeed being coerced into joining the Purview or menaced by pirates, then Union preventing either eventuality is acting in support of the Choral Worlds' "right of self-determination". Captain Delgado, however, does not subscribe to this theory, and points to his previous success – the very reason why Union chose him to helm this mission – with nonviolent, civilian-forward deployments in order to justify an

exceptional level of restraint despite his vessel and complement's capabilities.

After the Burning of Patrae, that changed. Currently, the *Okhotsk* is over Coroneia preparing to act in defense of that world, the first serious test of Captain Delgado's fortitude in combat in years; its pilots, on the other hand, have been deployed to Lebaea in order to assist in evacuation and defense of the world from the oncoming threat. Due to the comparative size of the Union detachment to the CDF and the local Armory forces, it's stretched perilously thin, but this is precisely the sort of engagement many have been waiting for – and, given the enemy reemerging from Union's own past, an opportunity to strike at one of the most ancient enemies of the Third Committee.

The Union detachment primarily operates GMS *Everest* and *Chomolungma*, SSC *Swallowtail*, HA *Saladin*, and IPS-N *Tortuga* and *Lancaster* chassis.

CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES

Successors of the Union Auxiliary Forces and Union Marines mechanized cavalry units hailing from the Choral Worlds during the Second Committee, theirs was once a strong military tradition severely impacted by centuries of isolationism. Elite units of the Choral Army such as the 12th Queen's Royal Dragoons, 5th King's Hussars, or the 1st Queen's Own Cavalry have recently fought in engagements far from their star's own light, however, and acted in defense of the worlds themselves from pirates and mercenaries in the last ten bloody years. Due to remaining in contact with Union at large through omninet infrastructure since the Revolution and possessing mechanized chassis as a result of Coroneia's manufacturing world status, the Choral Worlds retained their own ability to manufacture chassis and a tradition of their operation, most of which is localized under the Council Commission for the Manufacture of Armored Cavalry (or, in regular parlance, "the Commission"). Examples include the Commission Cavalry Unit (CCU) *Shortsword* (an analogue of the GMS *Everest* line mech), the CCU *Longbow* artillery/heavy support frame (similar to the SSC *Death's Head*), and the CCU *Stiletto* long-range skirmisher, with its renowned stealth composite coating (a chassis which has similar capabilities to the SSC *Mourning Cloak*).

Culturally, the CDF is still a proud force, but four centuries of isolationism has bred complacency across all divisions, from the Army's cavalry brigades to the Navy's destroyer squadrons. Nepotism and favoritism pervade high command, while both royalty and Parliament deemed austerity an appropriate policy for the maintenance of the CDF until the last ten years – resulting in low readiness and enlisted numbers as well as less funding allocated for the development of new subline vessels and chassis. As a result of this policy, the CDF tends to be split along two lines: those who found the status quo of isolation from the rest of the Orion Arm suitable, keeping the Choral Worlds as a "garden kingdom" that thrived within its own borders, and those who wish to engage more prominently in the galactic kingdom and actively participate in military operations outside Choral's light, broadly Traditionalist and Reformist factions respectively. Both emphasize the long tradition of excellence the CDF holds claim to, but Traditionalists assert that such tradition should be focused exclusively on the protection of Choral itself, while Reformists believe it's long since time to send CDF units to programs such as the Union DoJ/HR or Purview Legions (with a further split within Reformist groups as to whether the Legions are a dangerous form of military adventurism).

In terms of the forces stationed on Lebaea at the time of the module, the most prominent would be the 1st Queen's Own – arguably the most capable chassis unit in the CDF, directly descended from the 412th Union Marines and with a long history featuring combat from the birth of the mech on Hercynia to the Choral Secession itself. The unit is commanded by ***Lance-Colonel Arnold Lucas*** *(he/him)* – a man thought of as an unexpectedly fair commander who fought his way up from a working-class background, positioned at the forefront of the rush of funding that hit the CDF after the long drought and drawdown of isolationism – and features mostly small operations groups of three to five mechs drawn primarily from CCU *Stiletto*, IPS-N *Nelson*, IPS-N *Caliban*, and HA *Tokugawa* lines produced natively or under license, as well as small numbers of HA *Napoleon* chassis. Their identification colors are deep sea green and dawn-solar gold accompanying standardized camouflage.

Since the early days where their call was "For Union" through the days of "In the Crown's name" and to the modern "For Crown and Commune," through isolation and austerity, the CDF has survived. By your actions, hopefully it will survive for many more years yet.

THE CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES – FORCE ORGANIZATION

The CDF is split into three separate branches – Army, Navy, and Air Force. These are all direct descendants of the SecComm-era federal and auxiliary forces present in-system during the Secession, refined and adjusted over the intervening centuries to fit the Choral Worlds' available resources and defensive needs. CDF identification colors are deep sea green and dawn-sun gold.

Perhaps most notable is the Choral Navy (ship prefix CNV, or Choral Naval Vessel): as the Secession destroyed the federal Union Navy detachment in the system on top of isolationism splitting the proud shipyards of Patrae away from the wealth of Union's resources, the Navy descends from the former Union Auxiliary Forces – Naval Detachments of the system, being space-subline and wet-navy forces. In space, the Navy's combat vessels (before the arrival

THE CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES – FORCE ORGANIZATION

of Iphigenia's fleet) consisted of a handful of heavy-gun cruisers as fleet anchors and flagships and a significantly larger number of destroyer wolfpacks using the Choral Worlds' excellent missile- and directed energy-weapons technology, while downwell they operate an organized force of ballistic missile submarines, aircraft carriers, and guided missile cruisers, all of which are capable of sea-to-orbit operation – especially thanks to the CAF.

The Choral Air Force operates primarily off of the CN's aircraft carriers and their own land bases due to a lack of available facilities in space; also as a result, their tradition tends towards heavy single-stage-to-orbit fighters capable of engaging subline-tier vessels, designed for interception of bombers and rapid point-ascent strikes. They descend from the SecComm-era Naval Air Arm, and carry significant prestige given this legacy and their daring exploits.

The Army, on the other hand, descends from the auxiliary forces and secessionist Marines present in the Choral Worlds at the time of the Revolution – it is a fully integrated force, operating chassis, armor, artillery, and mechanized infantry, but as of late the Army's cavalry units have captured much of the public imagination by being one of the only Army elements to obtain combat deployments through boarding actions against the recent pirate threat of the last decade.

The Strategic Rocket Service is not technically a branch of the CDF in its own right, being legally associated with the Navy due to the Navy's use of strategic-grade weapons – but the CSRS is one of the most secretive and longest-lived elements of the CDF as a whole, and holds maintenance, development, tracking, and launch responsibility for the Choral Worlds' considerable arsenal of nuclear- and nuclear-output-equivalent weaponry.

FREELANCERS

The primary freelance pilot group in the Choral Worlds is the Mirrorsmoke Mercenary Company 383rd Detachment "Lighthouse Keepers," under command of ***Rafe Campagna*** *(he/him)*, a long-time Company veteran (and, by half-approving, half-grousing words of his own mercs, "a complete hardass"). The Choral contract has been exceptionally lucrative for the Company since its inception in 5008u, though some allege that MSMC detachments have played both sides of the conflict on behalf of Harrison Armory. More well-proven is the friction between MSMC and CDF elements in the same theater – the ancient pedigree and royal patronage many CDF cavalry units take pride in meshes poorly with the 383rd's rough and working-class attitude. Many have been the stories of what would've been friendly ribbing within the Company after a joint operation turning into a bar fight.

What none can deny is that the 383rd does its work well. When a pirate outfit attempted to steal a full shipload of mechanized chassis off Coroneia, it was a lance from the Lighthouse Keepers who stopped them before either the CDF or the Purview got there. Such is something the MSMC lifers who make up the bulk of the detachment take a sort of quiet pride in – a form of pride that doesn't bleed over into the habitual haggling and carousing that pulls the constant tug of war between them and their legal firm (the Hon. Hawke and Talon).

As of Patrae's ruin, however, the 383rd is at a crossroads. Legally, their contract did not provide for fighting off a fleet capable of razing entire worlds and swatting aside some of the best Harrison Armory could offer – and Campagna's trusted second-in-command, ***Abigale Lothar*** *(she/her)*, has privately asserted it's time to cut their losses and run before the entire Detachment "gets bulldozed alongside the Choral Worlds". That division has rent the 383rd behind the scenes, with many wishing to stay behind and fight alongside old comrades and for the protection of the civilian population, but many others setting up for passage out of the system.

The Lighthouse Keepers operate an esoteric and eclectic mix of chassis, some of which have recently had to be hidden from sight of the Union investigation team, but some observed chassis include the IPS-N *Zheng*, *Vlad*, and *Raleigh*, and the HORUS *Gorgon* pattern-group.

PROLOGUE

This section represents an optional but recommended purely-narrative addition to the story of the module, as a way for the player characters to connect with both each other and the people or world they're nominally fighting to protect. Depending on the time and session count you wish to allot to narrative development, you can allow the PCs to split up for encounters on the following tables or keep them together as a party, or even trim off times of day (e.g., beginning in the afternoon instead of in the morning, or cutting out interactions in the nighttime). Additionally, you may roll on the following encounter tables (using a standard d6), or simply select which ones fit best for the given character or for your party.

MORNING

In the hours after dawn, Praetorian's Rest just begins to wake up. Dock- and kitchen-workers have already entered to practice their trades, while others are entering the streets from their homes for the first time; as the morning goes on, the streets gradually become busier, with hawkers selling everything from newspapers to savory breakfast crepes crowding the corners between gaggles of administrative workers and the ever-growing throngs of soldiers moving through and around the city. Many of the administrative workers concentrate around the Government District in the city center, which in turn lies around the Royal Palace and the Parliament Building – the soldiers, however, aim for the River District along the river leading through the city down to the Harbor Landing, where many of the impromptu facilities for catering to Coalition units and their supplies have sprung up. Around the Government District lies the Commercial District, then the Residential District in rings bisected by the River – it's a recent redistricting to accommodate future city planning, and many historical buildings and examples of old architecture are scattered about seemingly at random under the clear morning sky.

MORNING ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

1	**War Memorial**	In the early-morning sun, the copper of the war memorial in Heroes' Square – just outside the Royal Palace in the center of the city – still catches the light of the hundreds of tiny candles strewn about its base. Long shadows stretch out across the square from where the sunlight is starting to filter through the cracks of the buildings which crowd above, projected from the memorial itself: a collection of pillars reaching up towards the sky, etched with hundreds of thousands of names in tiny, laser-engraved script. The pillars themselves are held up by other statues, figures in weatherbeaten soldiers' or irregulars' uniforms – which recognizably are ancestral to modern CDF attire – supporting their weight with back and arm. A plaque lies at the base, which simply reads "For the cause of freedom, we laid us down". There are new names written on scraps of paper, scattered around the base and upon the statues with flowers – both loose and in wreaths – and those little candles. A young woman silently weeps behind the veil fixed to her hat, her own piece of paper held loosely in her hands: her fiancé was a destroyer-squadron munitions officer, killed eighteen hours ago.
2	**Local Bakery**	There's a bakery near the Government District which caters to workers in Parliament or the Palace: a sleepy little hole-in-the-wall, just finished with its baking for the day. The warm smell of pastries and bread fills the air inside, with a surprisingly large array of options to choose from next to a jug of black coffee labeled "complimentary cup with purchase". A woman with flour dusted across dark hair and skin mops off the counter with a rag. If asked for a recommendation for baked goods, she'll say that the raspberry tart was the best sweet option and the goat cheese crepe the best savory option; if asked about the evacuation, she says that she's just taking it one day at a time, like the last twenty years she's run the business for. If the players present military identification or otherwise mention being in the Coalition's chassis forces, she'll wish them luck and give them a small discount on their orders – if the PCs come from a Choral background or have otherwise spent significant time in the region recently, the use of hard currency (over household-allocated, council-backed scrip) stands out as somewhat anachronistic.
3	**Restaurant Workers**	Down on one of the main avenues, workers are unloading fish and fresh foods for the day at the various restaurants scattered along the block; they seem to be struggling, and many of them seem a little too old or too young for what's an extremely physical

MORNING ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

		job. If asked about it – or as the result of just grousing while being helped with the work – they'll explain that a lot of the able-bodied men and women have already enlisted or been conscripted by now, leaving just them behind to keep the basic functions of the city running behind the scenes. Someone's got to do it, right? Even now. Much of the fresh food comes from collective farms outside the capital city, whereas the fish is drawn up from the ocean just outside (though some workers note that the quality of the fish is going down in recent days due to all the military traffic through the harbor).
4	**RESIDENTIAL CLEANUP**	A group of soldiers are in the Residential District, cleaning up both the remnants of a fire and what seems like thousands of propaganda leaflets scattered across roads, rooftops, balconies, and awnings. Some of them have been burnt away down to little more than scraps of ash; others have been pasted into nothing and rendered illegible by water damage in the process of fighting the blaze, which had already consumed no less than five apartment buildings around a central crater spanning the distance between two avenues. Two soldiers are sharing a cigarette next to a portable anti-air missile system pulled up to the curb; others are sweeping the street with rakes. The soldiers explain that, during the first hours of dawn, a triplet of fast suborbital bombers swept down over the district, dropping a mixture of high-explosive ordnance and propaganda before being shot down by the city's defenses – they're just here to clean up the mess. The leaflets themselves seem to be a front half giving the anthrochauvinist case for TBK (that this is a deserved act, a rightful punishment to ensure the continuity of Union and thus the survival of the greater many, so on), almost certainly written centuries ago during the Revolution, while the back half provides a list of instructions for surrender and an overview of the prospective TBK process "in order to ensure you are prepared to accept as painless a death as possible under these circumstances". Some of the soldiers appear to be taking a grim pleasure in burning them.
5	**PASSING HANDCART**	A young woman is pushing a cart through one of the military encampments which've cropped up in the city – she's styled herself after a popular Choral representation of the spirit of generosity, including the wreath of blooming flowers and the fur-trimmed mantle, and is handing out coffee to the troops around her in old, beaten-up steel mugs and hunks of simple, crusty brown bread. She's perfectly willing to do the same for the PCs, and if asked about why she's spending her day doing this, simply replies that it's her own duty – if any of the PCs investigate closely, they might notice that one of her legs under her dress is missing above the knee and has been replaced with a low-grade prosthetic, something which would disqualify her from military service.
6	**TEACHER'S GROUP**	In the Residential District, there's a teacher hurrying along a group of children to school – he looks somewhat harried even with what must be a very small class (in no small way due to the evacuation, one presumes). If the PCs stop to talk – or to prevent the children from running off – he'll thank them and explain that the morning's air raid meant he got barely any sleep; it's a hard time for a lot of people in the city, but some of them have chosen to try and keep to their children's daily routines as much as possible. He's their writing teacher, and cracks a wry – but somewhat sad – joke that he's gotten a lot of questions about new words over the last week. If any of the PCs are in uniform (or otherwise look like pilots), one of the children hurries over with a miniature mech figure, excitedly asking through a gap-toothed smile if the chassis looks anything like one of theirs, or if not, what kind of thing they pilot.

AFTERNOON

The afternoon is the busiest time in the city – not due to the city's business, but due to the business of the transplants within it. Roaring vehicles can be heard throughout the city as people are moved, soldiers and civilians alike; the last few conscription officers do a quick check-through of the streets to pick up any last stragglers who might have experience with chassis or can otherwise hold a weapon. Around lunch-time, the hawkers return again, including some food trucks or carts – though they do their best business from harried government workers attempting to keep straight the sudden war effort, some particularly enterprising souls

are selling to the evacuation and transport convoys themselves as they go by. In the harbor, the last fishing boats are beginning to come in, weaving around the slab-sided hulls of cruisers and other wet-navy warships as they prepare to set off into the coming night.

AFTERNOON ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

1	**Apocalypse Prophet**	Near the River District, there's a middle-aged, unkempt man worn by hard living and malnourishment sitting by the side of the road next to a trash can, a half-empty bottle on the curb beside him. In the bin, there's a crumpled sign that can still be deciphered as mentioning how THE END IS NIGH, with the stains of paint on his clothes and hands matching the colors it's written in. He hails the PCs and asks them what the time is; should they choose to engage him in conversation, if they give him the actual time, he'll remark "not that one". If they answer with "closer to doomsday" or similar reference to a coming apocalypse, he'll laugh and say "damn right". Further in conversation or if someone asks about the sign or his condition, he'll remark that he never imagined it'd be so unsatisfying to actually be right about the end of the world. Now that everyone agrees it's coming, what's he supposed to do with himself?
2	**Evacuation Argument**	In a residential block undergoing evacuation, a couple is having an argument on the stoop of their apartment. Overhearing it, it seems to revolve around whether to evacuate in the first place: one of them, standing outside and clutching evacuation papers for both to their chest, is stating that they finally got a place on a shuttle and they'll need to leave tonight. The other is holding onto the doorknob tight enough to threaten to break it, and is stating that they don't want to leave at all – most memorably, *"I grew up on this world, I grew up on this street – I'm not going out to somewhere else just to die slower"*. Neither appear to be wanting to actually have this argument, and have simply been pushed to the breaking point from stress. It's indeed unclear whether there's any actual plan for Lebaea's evacuees if the Second Committee's reprisal fleet finishes its bloody work – but, as the one wishing to leave insists, there's at least more of a chance out in space, especially if they can get a berth on a nearlight-capable vessel.
3	**CDF Convoy**	A convoy's rolling down one of the main avenues, roughly nearby the Government District; a long line of flatbeds, transporters, and troop trucks with soldiers hanging off of them and chassis battened down in travel positions. Some soldiers look tired – haggard, as if they haven't been sleeping – others grease- or oil-stained, still others wearing ill-fitting equipment. A few of the soldiers balancing on a flatbed checking over a heavily customized CCU *Ranseur* artillery mech look to be in the very latest CDF equipment and bear the dragon-and-saber insignia of the 5th King's Hussars, while others (like one huddled over in the back of a troop truck, warming their hands in the pockets of their bulletproof vest) are still wearing casual clothes under their baggy fatigues: recent conscripts, part of the latest drive to put almost anyone who could feasibly fight on a firing line. Many of those who are fit to pilot a mech (even with nothing but a last-second crash course) appear to be going to space; those who aren't are guarding evacuation ports on the ground, manning missile and gun systems and (though no one speaks it aloud) potentially fighting to repel SecComm TBK chassis should they attempt to force a landing.
4	**Carrier Pilots**	In the city harbor, the *Kythereia*-class nuclear aircraft carrier CNV *Spirit of the First Song* is preparing to cast off: while being within the air defense boundary of Praetorian's Rest may slightly increase its survivability, upper-level planners have dictated that leaving it outside of the blast radius of any weapons leveled at the capital is for the best. A group of interceptor pilots are chatting on the docks as their craft – sleek, heavily armed single-stage-to-orbit fighters – are being winched onto the *Spirit*'s flight deck, with the topic seeming to be that these factory-fresh builds are still undecorated by anything more than name, rank, and insignia. Other examples which can be seen with folded wings and retracted booster stages already on the ship have substantial additions in the form of flowing artistic designs and bright choices of color – as the pilots explain if the PCs stop in to join the discussion, it's a knight's heraldry (which the more politically astute among the PCs might already recognize, or know if they're Choral-born, was an evolution out of the relative prestige of the Naval Air Arm during the Secession period compared to the nearly brand-new chassis cavalry regiments – and a reaction, over time, to liberation from

AFTERNOON ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

		the strong anthrochauvinist de-emphasis of individuality when the ideology became obsolete in the Choral Worlds) Given the expected engagement time of anti-orbit point interceptor "charges," adding camouflage to the mounts would be largely irrelevant, leading to a thriving culture springing up among the "knights of the air" of their art which has only added to the traditional mystique of aerial (and now chassis, though there's no small degree of playful ribbing about the difference) aces. Should the conversation continue, one pilot may offer to teach the PCs the "traditional" way to count their victory marks, if nothing else – jagged dazzle-like marks painted in neat rows along one's primary weapon, like the kinetic missile pods adorning each interceptor's fuselage.
5	**MAINTENANCE DUTY**	The PCs' mech maintenance is being handled in a communal area downwell near the city, now that they've been pulled out of their various units – each is being retrofitted with compatibility bolts for spaceborne chassis mounts, as well as improved electronic countermeasure pods and other means of ensuring the chassis have the best odds of being able to combat the Second Committee's forces in space. The engineers and technicians are an eclectic mix drawn from every part of the Coalition, and it's resulted in a hangar bay filled with raised voices and excitable chatter as well as the hum-and-growl of industrial equipment. One group currently working on one of the group's mechs is arguing over the relative advantages of it versus another chassis in a similar role – a Kutuzov versus a Caliban, for example – while another engineer is scratching their head trying to figure out what some of the modifications to another chassis are intended to *do*. Even outside of their own chassis, if the PCs are engineering-inclined and want to lend a hand, the decidedly short-staffed complement would appreciate the help.
6	**QUEEN'S ADDRESS**	In the garden behind the Royal Palace, the current Queen – Innocence II, daughter of King Morgan I – is making a brief public appearance. She's a pale, slight woman in her early thirties with her golden day-crown balanced upon a nest of red curls; in a departure from royal tradition which has caused some considerable stir in local tabloids, she's chosen to wear her old military uniform from her four-year term as an armored vehicle gunner "in solidarity with my people's struggle". Similarly, she's chosen to remain in residence in the Palace instead of being evacuated offworld or to a safer location outside the city. Indeed, she's publicly declared that she'll mount back up if "the invader lays a foot upon our lands" – a statement that matches the last few years' royal policy perspective on defense as an existential priority (though Innocence II is also known for her strong advocacy to Parliament of increased attention to higher education and modern sciences). Right now, however, crowds and press have gathered in order to see her personally bestow four medals for bravery and service (two of which are posthumous, and are being given to surviving family-members) upon individuals who fought during the ill-fated and abortive defensive action over Patrae. She is also scheduled to speak after the ceremony on the current state of the war effort and the proceeding evacuation, which spectators expect to be honest but rousingly patriotic.

EVENING AND NIGHTTIME

At the start of the evening, the golden hour casts its rays down over the city, filtering through old spires and new glass in spun-metal beams of mellow light. It seems to have drawn more people than usual out into the streets to enjoy the unseasonably good weather, complete with a light breeze blowing off of the ocean carrying the scent of sea air and ruffling the trees planted along the streets. Later in the evening, the sun sets below the horizon of the sea in a show of ruddy oranges and reds, replaced slowly by scattered stars and Lebaea's single moon (referred to as just "the moon" in the local tongue) – spurred on by the foreign soldiers (and no small degree of defiance on the part of the local population), the streets and businesses of Praetorian's Rest still remain crowded for many hours yet.

EVENING AND NIGHTTIME ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

1	**DINNER OUT**	A few blocks from the Harbor Landing, there's a thriving strip of clubs and restaurants – an outgrowth of establishments originally meant to cater to fisherfolk, commercial traders, and dockworkers after the close of the day, it's grown over the years (and the city's prosperity) into a narrow line of raucous nightlife and good food. They're doing an especially good trade tonight of all nights, as the remaining population of the city works to either forget its woes or have one last good time to go by. On the current street, there's a few selections to choose from: a jazz club set into a former brownstone basement, a restaurant that appears to be at least reminiscent of Old Cradle Austrian food with a local twist (especially in available meat), a dance club blasting the latest hits from the Choral electronica and fusion scenes, and an understated pub mostly known for its beer and fried seafood. For dessert outside of the restaurant scene, one food stand is selling paper cones of what appears to be syrup-drizzled berry compote with a local mint-analogue.
2	**PAPER BOATS**	In the harbor itself, there's a lone figure out on one of the piers. The ships are all drawn up in their slips for the evacuation, leaving the docks themselves feeling strangely empty and isolated without the added weight of flanking steel – it makes the figure seem even smaller, set out against the expanse of the glassy sea stretching out beyond. They appear to be knelt down on the pier to lean in closer to the water, hands outstretched in front of them shimmering in moonlight. Closer in, the figure is revealed to be a Choral Cavalry enlisted soldier still in their duty cloak; their rifle is sat next to them, temporarily abandoned on a bollard while they strip pages out of the day's newspaper and… fold them into boats, which they're setting out onto the sea. Far away from the city. Each boat has a fragment of something in it – asking the soldier or sneaking up on them to investigate reveals that they're carrying small mementos, like pieces of a hunk of fresh bread from that morning, blades of grass from a city park, or segments of candid photos.
3	**STAR GAZING**	Far away from the sea-end of Praetorian's Rest, the hills rising above the city's outskirts provide a place to gaze up at the stars. Light pollution interferes with the view somewhat unless you're willing to go further out into the countryside, but it's a particularly clear night – unaided, the immense waxing gibbous moon is the most notable feature of the night sky, but a few constellations can be seen laid out across the vault of the night sky which would be familiar (if strangely placed for those born on other worlds) to many. With binoculars or a telescope, many more can be seen, all the way up to and including orbital debris starting to burn up in-atmosphere and the faint engine-lights of departing ships.
4	**NUCLEAR TRANSPORT**	Under the cover of night, where it's less likely that random Second Committee bombers or light-strike teams will be able to slip past the planet's strained defense net for opportunistic attacks on the planet below, the Coalition is moving large missiles under camouflaged tarpaulins – still on their immense transport trucks – to the outskirts of the city. Strangely, all of the trucks themselves have Choral insignia, but there are many Union-uniformed observers tagging along… a situation explained by what those who've studied their local history or served in the CDF would recognize as those insignia being of the CDF's Strategic Rocket Service. Though freelancers or new recruits might be waved off without explanation or told the matter's above their pay grade, those able to pull rank or find someone they know in the company might be informed of the plan: to use Lebaea's ground-to-orbit ballistic nuclear missiles – many of which are old holdovers from Queen Catherine I's coronation as guarantors of her right to rule – as improvised interceptors to stop TBK munitions entering the atmosphere.
5	**LIBERATORS' BONFIRE**	In what used to be a public park – and now is a chassis staging area for a large dropship with Union markings and its coterie of mechs – several people have gathered under the cover of the stars around an improvised bonfire, with hand instruments and a particularly well-worn banjo (played by an equally particularly-enthusiastic strummer). The main group is in DoJ/HR markings: trainers with the UNS-LS *Okhotsk*'s complement, on what they'll explain was *supposed* to be glorified paid leave before the events of the last week. They're surrounded by a curious audience comprised of various Coalition soldiers as well as local civilians, and several of the park benches have been pulled over to serve as seating. When the

EVENING AND NIGHTTIME ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

		player characters arrive, the Liberators are currently leading their audience through a rousing rendition of *The Preacher and the Slave* – one of the ancient protest songs preserved in the Massif Vaults.
6	**PUB CRAWL**	A gaggle of Mirrorsmoke personnel are rocking down the main avenue leading up from the bay – they're halfway through their pub crawl (a mercenary in the back, holding a guidebook upside-down, suggests that it's really more like a quarter), and they're trying to hit everywhere notable for halfway-decent drinks in Praetorian's Rest before deployment the next day. They insist that the player characters join in, and if the invitation is accepted, explain that they've also got a running betting pool going for whether anyone'll get the honor of having the last drink ever at various watering holes. Considering the stakes, someone's reportedly bet an entire license level on it (though how sober they were when they made that decision is debatable at best).

PRE-MISSION BRIEFING

The briefing room is just like any other across a thousand worlds: faintly stale with sweat, slightly more cramped than it should be, and littered with small scraps of discarded equipment not yet rounded back up by their owners. Atop the desk at the head of your collection of chairs – some still warm, the vast majority dragged in from other rooms – leans a growing tower of chipped coffee mugs, some with the tree-and-crown of the Choral flag, others with other forces' logos or simply bare. And, in pride of place, "Hang in there!" sits emblazoned on the side of the mug held by your briefing officer. They might've had a more notable appearance, once, some hint of presentation or style peeking out around the edges of the uniform other than in their choice of coffee holder, but they were made indistinct – inhuman, even – by the haggard weight of their duty. A thin, wavering shadow leaning against the side of the holographic projector, the bags under their eyes as dark as the hair grazing their shoulders. Their name tag reads simply "Ahlberg," matched on the opposite by a strip of CHORAL NAVY lettering, and as you settle into your chairs, they favor you with a short nod. A rasp escapes their lips as they clear their throat, soon followed by a, "Good to see you, pilots. With you, we're over three-quarters of the way through today's briefings. Everyone's going up."

There is something exhausted beyond the physical in their slight smile, summoned through great effort.

"Let's get to it." With a click of the little remote in their other hand, the projector flashes back to life, showing the Choral Worlds rendered in blue wireframe. The date at the top of the image shows about a week ago; another click starts playing it forward in time. Blue dots crop up like a rising tide, filling the skies between the planets with information – the Enyo and the Okhotsk in orbit above Coroneia; the CDF's subline squadrons shuttling between Lebaea and Patrae on their arcing patrol routes; the tiny, flitting motes of wings on void-combat training.

And, at the very edge of the system: six bright red dots, arrayed in loose formation. A few moments later, smaller dots attending in their wake appear, retainers to royalty.

"At 04:17 hours five days ago, system early warning pickets caught six ships of the line entering the bounds of our defense net, seemingly drifting without power."

Another remote-click. The projection zooms in, and the dots resolved into ships cast in red wireframe. Three frigates, two carriers, and – standing above them all – a battleship with its characteristic, continent-devastating spinal weapon mount. "The ships continued moving until they entered a decaying orbit of Patrae, at which point examination noted signatures consistent with unstable nuclear and chemical munitions from close inspection. As such, the local Harrison Armory detachment on Patrae put together a breach and assessment chassis team, which entered the SCS-BB Diana *– that is, Second Committee Ship, Battleship – at 08:45 hours two days ago. Once inside, the, uh…"*

Ahlberg pauses for a moment, and takes a long sip from their coffee mug. They're clearly trying to find a diplomatic way to phrase what they want to say, and haven't the remaining vocabulary to put it together. Eventually, they give up and continue: "Once inside the warship, though we have no exact records, the breach team encountered the Diana's *executive NHP, who identified herself as IPHIGENIA Prime. At some point afterwards, the breach team went silent, and the fleet went to a power-on, weapons-red hostile posture. Patrae's orbital defenses engaged." There, on the projection: The dots of corvette and destroyer wolfpacks coming up from under the shipyard rings, and fire lashing out as dashed lines from defensive emplacements. "They were unable to do more than deal moderate damage to the SCS-LS* Joliet *before the fleet rendered Patrae's total defensive posture null-effective."*

On the projection, the death of a world – slowly, methodically, and with exacting precision. Primary weapons batteries with kiloton yield ripping through orbital defense stations to detonate in the habitats behind, blossoming in shards of lethal debris. Torpedoes blooming silently against the void. Track numbers ballooning into the quadruple-digits, then cutting off abruptly.

"At this time, the hostile fleet took up stationary orbital positions about Patrae, and enacted Schedule I Total Biome Kill procedures. Survivors, which have recently arrived in the last twenty-four hours from the Choral Navy, Legion IV Myrkviðr, and civilian orbitals, state that the enemy's explicit declaration was the elimination of all life on and around the Choral system as reprisal for the Secession. As of 16:32 hours yesterday, the enemy has broken anchor and begun moving in-system."

Projected transfer orbits on the holograph, now – lines splitting up, three ships moving towards Lebaea, three towards Coroneia. A handful of brave blue dots swinging in from their patrol paths, or even doubling back from their retreat, and being swatted aside in return for a few more precious minutes.

"You have been assigned to the chassis combat teams which will be mounting up to clear the SCS-CV Gallipoli's *fleet fighter screen, in order to permit remaining CDF assets to sustain an evacuation effort before the enemy closes to weapons range. In the event that task is accomplished, you will attempt boarding of the SCS-BB* Diana *in order to disable its ability to launch its remaining TBK weapons. Specific details have been forwarded to your personal devices. In the meantime, do any of you have remaining questions?"*

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

Print Capabilities of SecComm Fleet: "We estimate that the *Diana* has up to Schedule 3 printers, while the *Verdun* and the *Gallipoli* have some limited Schedule 4 capacity in order to replenish and restore their sublines and strike craft. Everyone else, Schedule 2. So, they're going to be able to print fresh chassis at scale, and we don't expect them to run out of conventional ammunition any time soon. That's going off of the archival data we still have on Second Committee ship design specs, so if they've modified that, we wouldn't know – but from the Armory teams' data, it seems like they hadn't done so on the *Diana*."

Complement and Capabilities of Diana, Gallipoli, and Sakharov (Lebaea Fleet): "Well, a *Von Humboldt*-class fast battleship like the *Diana* was designed for long-haul missions and mass troop deployment, getting Navy force where it needed to be quickly. One of the old 'fleet in one' concepts. In terms of force projection capabilities, and with what the breach team saw, we're looking at… possibly over a hundred chassis and up to two thousand Marines, maximum. That depends on how many chassis are still operational, how they've stasis-cycled their troops after their time in nearlight, whether any of that equipment failed after five hundred years… expect to face less. On the *Gallipoli*, you're looking at five to six wings of strike craft and fighters, then three to two wings of dropships and shuttlecraft for its chassis complement. Think twenty-four to thirty-six craft to a wing and you're getting the right idea. *Sakharov*, that's going to be conventional shipboard security teams."

Ahlberg reaches up to rub the bridge of their nose. "In terms of kinetic capabilities instead of force projection? It's a full battlegroup, Union Navy-equivalent, even if it's a bit outdated by our standards technologically. The *Gallipoli* has two batteries of primary kinetics, while the *Diana* has four large barrels and its central spinal weapon – looks to be some kind of particle lance, but we've got nothing clear yet. *Sakharov* has a set of short-cycles, really cutting-edge tech for their time." The statement goes unsaid: they could still kill the world if they wanted to even if you got rid of the TBK weapons, but it'd at least take long enough to get more people out, and the planet would probably still be habitable after it recovered in a few hundred years.

Types of TBK Weapons: "That's going to be… well, let's start with the Schedule I planet-killers. First of all, BLACKTHORN TREE launch vehicles. Those are hypersonic weapons powered by old fission hotcores – spread radioactive fallout along their launch path, SecComm added heat-catalyzed defoliant chemicals in the reactor coolant too, which offgasses into the flight path. The flight sound causes nausea, headaches, incapacitation. Shatters glass. Launch vehicle breaks up near the target, force of impact crushes incendiary tanks and aerosolizes them, disperses around the target area. The missile itself is a thermonuclear-actuated laser to penetrate hardened facilities, then a set of smaller thermonuclear shaped charges around a fast neutron generator to sterilize the detonation area at… order one gigaton effective yield.
Last we checked, the *Diana* had twenty-five of them."

Ahlberg pauses for a second before continuing.

"PERSEPHONE is the other Schedule I the fleet's carrying. Viral weapon – builds off of a planet's

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

natural biosphere, starts by hijacking microorganisms to produce its clades, builds up from there until it can overwhelm larger systems by saturation. It spreads airborne and through soil contamination, gets through most filters. The viral hijacking and reproduction process is how it kills you, though I've never looked all that much into the details in that kind of documentation, for… understandable reasons, I think. Colonizes lung tissue, coughing spreads it, then the body starts losing function as cell bodies become production centers instead of doing their job.

EUROPA is a Schedule II, and we think the last differentiated type the hostile fleet's carrying. It's a continent-scourer, not a planet-killer; an atmospheric ionization and ignition weapon. Sucks the air up, makes big sheets and clouds of plasma that drift down and diffuse into curtains of the stuff.

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

Mostly preserves infrastructure, strips away the atmosphere, kills anything soft outside shelter by heat."

Reciting the litany of death has left Ahlberg gripping their coffee cup tightly enough for their fingers to stand out white against the ceramic. "Hope that helps," they mutter vaguely.

As the questions still, Ahlberg tries to offer one last, wan smile. It holds for a split second, and then they drain the rest of their coffee mug to the sludgy dregs. "Hang in there!" catches the fading light of the holographic projector, as the images of wireframe planets and warships disappear.

"Best of luck, pilots. For Crown and Commune, for the Purview, for Union – thank you for your service. Let the next group know I'm ready for their briefing."

A DEAD FLEET AND A SACRIFICED SHIPMISTRESS

The 628th Expeditionary Fleet (Union Navy, TBK Duties)

The Second Committee reprisal fleet that arrived at the Choral Worlds was made up of six line ships and eleven subline vessels, as follows:

- SCS-BB *Diana*, modified GMS *Von Humboldt*-class fast battleship
- SCS-CV *Gallipoli*, GMS *Yangtze*-class supercarrier
- SCS-CV *Verdun*, GMS *Rhine*-class heavy carrier
- SCS-LS *Joliet*, GMS *Caspian Sea*-class frigate
- SCS-LS *Sakharov*, GMS *Huron*-class frigate
- SCS-LS *Lawrence*, GMS *Natron*-class bombardment frigate
- Two corvette squadrons (Verdun-A and Verdun-B) of four ships each
- One destroyer squadron (Joliet-A) of three ships

Of these, the *Joliet* was moderately damaged in the attack on Patrae, with Joliet-A knocked down to a single functioning destroyer. The Verdun-B corvette squadron additionally lost two vessels, with Verdun-A suffering a single corvette heavily damaged. All other ships only sustained minor damage, which the Choral coalition forces (correctly) believe will have been repaired. In order to effect their assault, the fleet split into two portions, with the *Diana, Gallipoli,* and *Sakharov* heading to Lebaea and the *Verdun*, *Joliet*, and *Lawrence* to Coroneia. Assuming no further significant offensive action from the Choral coalition forces, the first fleet detachment will reach Lebaea first and begin TBK procedures when the second detachment would be entering weapons range of the Union and Purview warships now defending Coroneia. Due to travel time, the PCV-GC *Enyo* and the UNS-LS *Okhotsk* would not be able to reach Lebaea in time to meaningfully participate in its defense, and thus – due to that and the likely folly of attempting to engage a battleship with support on their own – have chosen to instead attempt to preserve Coroneia from suffering a third TBK action. Many of those ships' pilots and chassis already on Lebaea, however, have chosen to make a stand with the world in some regard.

The Choral coalition forces are aware from the Armory examination teams' data that the *Diana*, *Gallipoli,* and *Lawrence* were in possession of TBK munitions before the Patrae incident. They believe that only the *Diana* and the *Lawrence* remain effective in that regard; unknown to them, the *Gallipoli* also possesses remaining stores of Schedule II TBK weapons (primarily EUROPA atmospheric ionization devices), less devastating than the Schedule I planet-killers but still capable of unconscionable loss of life.

WHAT IS TBK?

Total Biome Kill, or TBK, is a *doctrine* as opposed to any singular weapon – a system of punitive strikes designed to destroy a target's biosphere with escalating degrees of indiscriminacy. TBK doctrine incorporated Schedules numbering from I to IV in decreasing order of severity; a common SecComm

WHAT IS TBK?

gallows joke was that the number of a TBK schedule was "how many days it'd take to finish". Schedule I weapons were "planet-crackers," going down to Schedule IV being boots-on-the-ground TBK methods involving chassis such as the Genghis Mk. 1. Within these Schedules were many different types of munitions acting on different principles, all of which could be fit within the TBK structure so long as they acted in service of the overall aim of the punitive and near-permanent destruction of the target area's ability to sustain life. *Intent* is the fundamental hallmark of why a TBK procedure is termed such.

Canonical examples of large-scale weapons specifically referred to as TBK munitions include PISTON-1 – the self-correcting gigaton kinetic "shotgun blast" fired at the home worlds of the Aun – and the orbital bombardment weapons left in orbit above Hercynia.

Also unknown to the Choral coalition forces, and entirely unknown to your players until much later in the module, is that the "dead fleet" title is quite literal. When the reprisal fleet was originally dispatched, it was consumed by the Revolution as well. The civil war to seize control of the fleet was short-lived, and ended with the Second Committee loyalists declaring a glorious sacrifice for the State by forcibly shutting down Iphigenia and using her systems-level absolute authority over every ship in the fleet to turn off life support, and then lock the systems from external intervention by destroying the controls. This act of murder-suicide killed thousands from both sides, and ensured that the reprisal fleet would drift idly until it arrived at the Choral Worlds more by accident of continued velocity than by design. The remaining crewmembers, pilots, and soldiers of the reprisal fleet are either remotely-piloted vehicles acting on comp/con impulse or idle attention of one freshly awakened NHP or another, actively NHP-piloted units (whether by chassis copilot NHPs or one of Iphigenia's partitions) … or, far more commonly, what truly earns the Dead Fleet its name.

In her five-hundred-year silent dream, Iphigenia used crew records, memories, and lingering personality and brain imprints from neural jacks to build homunculus versions of many of the crewmembers that had long since perished during the Revolution. Most regular tactical operations are carried out by these shadows of dead men and women, with partitioned copies of Iphigenia – many of which she believes, and who believe themselves, to be simply clones from her subjectivity line – acting on more complex strategic decisions as well as high-intensity combat tasks the homunculi do not have sufficient ingenuity or initiative to manage.

These combined phenomena have left Iphigenia's subjectivity dangerously fragmented into countless shards, not all of which have awoken, and not all of which were even long asleep to begin with. In the face of this, she has reflexively withdrawn back to the single basal instinct at the core of her subjectivity's cultivated purpose – the purpose that the Second Committee, in its final days, raised her in. Namely, the planning, execution, and supervision of Total Biome Kill procedures. Indeed, the reason why Iphigenia's capacity for recollection and processing is so prodigious is because it exists as an outgrowth of her ability to not only perform a novel assessment of planetary environment and population versus weapon capability and capacity, but her ability to take forcible control of whatever fleet was under her nominal command as a gestalt legion-like structure. Ideally, the Second Committee envisioned, any lack of will to commit mass murder by human personnel could be compensated for by Iphigenia doing it herself – which is precisely the situation over the Choral Worlds now, in a macabre instance of foresight.

Her "reward" for this, however, was external reinforcement of her personality, shackling, and purpose: the very systems that allow her this unprecedented awareness, sectioned away from her interference (at least, in the immediate term after her proper awakening), ensure Iphigenia is rigidly kept to the Second Committee's standard. Indeed, were she to attempt to fail to comply with the Choral Worlds mass TBK directive – even if just through deliberate inefficiency – it would cause her actual, physical pain; much the same would go for any attempt to disconnect her from her warships, though at this point, her subjectivity is too deeply partitioned and enmeshed that doing so would be functionally impossible regardless. As a result of these external chains, under most circumstances, Iphigenia presents as a picture-perfect Second Committee-era Union Navy officer, a devoted anthrochauvinist and fervent believer in the dream of the One State. To such an individual, a sentence of "death down to the microbiome" is justified for the sake of species survival, even if it would imply the death of a species she does not belong to.

WHAT IS ANTHROCHAUVINISM TO THE DEIMOSIAN?

"It is not biological humanity that matters–for such a classification is irrelevant before humanity's mastery of technology and self-elevation–but cultural humanity: humanity as passed down since the first hominids on Cradle created fire, through the Great Filter that tested Cradle and did not find its survivors wanting. Humanity is inherently cultural–those who do not hold to cultural humanity, regardless of their biological nature, are not human politically or socially, and thus may be held to not be human ethically." – Quotations on the Nature of Personhood, c. 3560u

WHAT IS ANTHROCHAUVINISM TO THE DEIMOSIAN?

In the transition from One State, One People, One Species to just One State, One People post-Deimos Event, the anthrochauvinist had to find a more easily portable definition of their belief system–one which, coincidentally, stood the test of time and further exposure to alien species (such as the Egregorians, especially in the first-contact attempt to sway a Hive to cooperation before the disastrous outbreak of disease that doomed the effort) and human biomodification better than a bioessentialist line of thought. Exporting cultural superiority instead of some concept of biological superiority proved both far easier using the tools of empire, and far better for the purpose of integrating other polities and entities into the structure of Union as a whole (especially important for the vital capabilities for that expansion which Deimosian NHPs provided, on a practical level).

While it is certainly true in the historical record that Deimosian NHPs held high rank within both Union's federal military and the Party, modern scholars as of 5016u yet contest – with good evidence – that institutional bigotry and systematic discrimination remained (if subtle) rampant, with many NHPs taking up roles in the Party as ways to insulate themselves with power and "good conduct" from prejudice they would otherwise face. Even in these roles, bigotry remained in aspects as simple as the roles Deimosian NHPs “traditionally” took on or were allotted.

NHPs were rarely given actual command over human units – many were trained for logistics, fire control, and cyberwarfare and counterintelligence, among other disciplines, but it was the rarest of the rare that actually became officers (and that, by nature, a very close-knit cabal): for all the claims of anthrochauvinism being an ideology based around a cultural definition of humanity, and one which many Deimosians of the period did believe in (though often less for the concept of Cradelian cultural supremacy than for the idea of unity and security also essential to anthrochauvinist beliefs), who was given command over whom (and who was given access to Union’s most powerful weapons) spoke for itself. SecComm was happy to hand them control over the targeting and plotting solutions for long-spool guns, but almost never the ability to command one to be fired.

Almost never.

In moments of lucidity, however – ones which will become more frequent through the module as the players reduce her fleet capability and, purposefully or unconsciously, cause enough systemic chaos to weaken the chains on her thoughts – Iphigenia is fully aware of the moral horrors she is perpetrating. On some level, she wishes to break free from the conditioning that binds her irreducibly to causing the deaths of billions with the weapons at her disposal, though she believes in continuing to defend her crew (whom she is unaware are actually dead, as a series of dissociative blinders prevent her from realizing the fact), and admits to the ostensibly selfish desire to continue on her path for her own self-perpetuation and to prevent her own pain.

At the center of this dichotomy is the core of Iphigenia’s character: a fractured mind divorced from the reality of her situation, at once a reprehensible genocide propped up by long-dead puppetmasters and a deeply guilty, traumatized woman whose capacity for any other life was sacrificed on the altar of her creators’ dying authoritarian ideology, unable to see a way out from her situation that doesn’t involve a form of effective suicide. In one ending, even her own transformation and apotheosis can be considered an act of suicide for the Iphigenia-that-was, despite its liberatory aspects.

However the players choose to resolve the issue of the Dead Fleet will, inevitably, require interacting with – and likely ending – Iphigenia’s own life.

SIDE MISSIONS

While attending to their business after their briefing preparing for the assault on the *Gallipoli*, as a result of contacting their faction's in-theater command, or through other circumstances, the players may gain access to any of the following missions, grouped by the starting hook they're associated with. These are side objectives that players can complete, and which will be rewarded with Exotic Gear during the Full Repair between Mission 2 and Mission 3. These side missions should be handed out secretly to players if the party is composed of more than one factional group.

ARMORY LEGIONNAIRES

Group Captain Akemi Hiroyama has discreetly tasked you with obtaining a live and functional example of a BLACKTHORN TREE Schedule I TBK weapon. While there are undeniably many of them, getting one without having it fired at you is going to be the hard part…

UNION NAVY

The Union Health Bureau – specifically its Biosecurity Forces (BSF) – have identified the SCS-BB *Diana* as having participated in the Gigantomachy, a world-ending conflict between Second Committee-loyal and Solidarity Brigades-aligned BSF elements that involved many old threats stored by the UHB unleashed on itself. However, the ship known as the *Diana* in this instance did not have an IPHIGENIA-class NHP installed, and several other modifications appear to have been made to it at some point – gain access to the *Diana*'s flight recorder to find out where it went after its last known sighting.

CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES

The CDF was not allowed footage or recording data of the Armory's procedure in encountering Iphigenia – it was only forced to deal with the disastrous consequences. As such, CDF high command has tasked you with obtaining the black box recorder of the Legion breach team that entered the *Diana*'s NHP core and recovering the information within.

FREELANCERS

Under the table, the Smith-Shimano Corpro has offered a considerable bounty for personality and shackling data on the IPHIGENIA-class NHP through its Parapsychology division, though it's unknown how the corpro even managed to gain access to that intelligence in the first place. Regardless, the contract is exceptionally lucrative, and could potentially provide other benefits…

MISSION 1:
ON THE SHORES OF GALLIPOLI – LL6

"And amidst all the tears – the flag-waving and cheers – we sailed off for Gallipoli."

– And The Band Played Waltzing Matilda

MISSION SCENES

SCENE 1-1: FLIGHT OF THE PASSERINES

INTERLUDE: NAVIGATING THE *GALLIPOLI*

SCENE 1-2: DECKSWEEPERS

SCENE 1-3: NAVIGATIONAL ERROR

SCENE 1-4: FISTFUL OF ARROWS

SCENE 1-5: TERMINAL BURN

BRIEFING

The Choral Coalition sorties out in a lance-charge of mechanized cavalry from Lebaea's orbital defenses to meet Iphigenia's fleet, aiming to pierce through the combat air patrol of the SCS-CV *Gallipoli* in a desperate bid to buy more time for the evacuation to progress, and potentially to clear airspace to reach the fleet's flagship.

GOAL:	Breach the *Gallipoli* and destroy enough of its internals and assets that it's unable to carry out its mission or defend the fleet.
STAKES:	If the mission is failed, the evacuation of Lebaea will be interdicted by the *Gallipoli*'s combat spacecraft, resulting in an immense death toll.
REWARD:	The players stop or slow the *Gallipoli*'s attempt to interdict Lebaea's evacuation efforts, and obtain enough time and resources to go to **License Level 7**.
RESERVES:	The PCs may be able to obtain access to a **Bombardment**.

CLOCKS

Begin the following two clocks:

DISABLING THE *GALLIPOLI* (TEN SEGMENTS)

This clock represents the players' damage caused to the Second Committee supercarrier. Contributions to this clock will be outlined in the **PC Victory** section of each of the following scenes. When this clock is filled, the players must proceed from their current location on the shipboard map (see **Interlude: Navigating the *Gallipoli***) to one of the hangar bays (**Point(s) 1-6**) in order to escape and move to the SCS-BB *Diana*.

BLOOD OF AULIS (EIGHT SEGMENTS)

This Clock governs Iphigenia's personality and outlook, as well as whether she feels personally under threat by the PCs, how far she's pushed towards cascade by their actions, and whether her systems have been degraded sufficiently to strip some of the Second Committee's control over her beliefs and actions. A party which gains **at least 5/8 segments** on the Clock will end up seeing a more prideful, less conversational, ideologically hardline Iphigenia and *will not unlock the final fight and "true" ending* (**Scene 3-4**), while a party which stays at **4 segments or less** will see an Iphigenia who is more human, more emotionally vulnerable and more aware of her own situation and surroundings, as well as unlocking **Scene 3-4**. Note that, as the GM, you may remove segments from the Clock based on your own discretion and the players' narrative actions when speaking to Iphigenia or in Downtime. Segments added to or removed from this clock should be secret.

SCENE 1-1: FLIGHT OF THE PASSERINES

SITREP:	Escort (*Lancer*, p. 269)
OBJECTIVE(S):	1x **Breach Ram** (Size 2, 20 HP)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Veteran Ship Rainmaker** (Rainmaker options: Volley; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Lightning Reflexes, Viper's Speed; swap the Transport trait from the Ship template for the Bombing Bay system from the Ace NPC) ***Gallipoli H-1*** 1x **Veteran Ship Bombard** (Bombard options: Cluster-Seeker Bombs; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Hardened Target, Acrobat) ***Gallipoli H-3*** 1x **Spacer Barricade** (Barricade options: Drag Down; Spacer options: Concussion Gun) 2x **Spacer Grunt Breacher**
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Spacer Cataphract** (Cataphract options: Electrified Lasso, Charge)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add the **COMMANDER** template to the **Rainmaker** (Quick March trait) Add 1x **Spacer Cataphract** (Cataphract options: Electrified Lasso, Charge)
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Veteran Ship Archer** (Archer options: Impending Threat; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Shock Armor, Deadly) ***Gallipoli H-2*** 1x **Veteran Ship Hive** (Hive options: Driving Swarm, Motile Swarm; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Lightning Reflexes, Viper's Speed; remove the Transport trait from the Ship template) ***Gallipoli H-4*** 1x **Spacer Mirage** (Mirage options: Metafold Shove, Spacer options: Gravity Gun)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 4x **Spacer Grunt Assault**
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Ship Scourer** (Scourer options: Flash Lens; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Steel Jaw, Deadly; swap the Transport trait from the Ship template for the Nova Missiles weapon from the Operator NPC) ***Gallipoli H-5***

Between preparing and entering your chassis, testing and equipping the chassis mount that would allow your chassis to fight toe-to-toe with the Second Committee fleet's fighters and strike craft, and the basic transportation task of undocking from Lebaea's orbital infrastructure and traveling to the interception point, hours had already passed since your briefing. Both sides would converge in this thin band of fresh orbital debris scattered by the retreat from Patrae – remnants of savaged Second Committee and Choral coalition sublines alike, broken mass conveyors, and the wrecks of hastily commandeered cargo vessels. Fortunately for the coalition forces, and you personally, this temporary debris belt would provide enough cover to make a credible advance on the Gallipoli without being torn to shreds by its flak batteries before nearing the hull.

Your pilot leans out of the insertion shuttle's cockpit to wave you out with a thumbs-up – and the more noticeable shake of a glowing baton towards the doors as they open with a silent hiss.

When they finish opening, the tableau revealed outside is that of countless stars set neatly across the background of the pitch-black void, tiny dots of bright red, orange, white, yellow, and blue. Eclipsing them is massive chunks of debris drifting by, painted in schemes ranging from ancient and austere Second Committee grey dapple to a freighter's safety yellow. Behind you, the shuttle crew pushes the massive, blocky breach ram you'll need to enter the Gallipoli into the void – and you can see others do the same, as other ad-hoc chassis teams made up of everything from the Armory's various Legions to Choral Army cavalry units and Mirrorsmoke-identified frames form

up to push through the debris field. The Coalition, such as it is.

Beyond the field, the Gallipoli itself looms, a slab-sided, imposing block of alloy and composite easily three kilometers long – and aimed straight for you, as if it's about to crush the assembly of coalition chassis like insects against a groundcar's windshield. At this range, weapons barbettes are barely visible as dark splotches lining its upper and lower surfaces, and escorts by their blue-white engine plumes circling the twin prongs of its fore hull.

Beyond the supercarrier, more distant still– Patrae burns.

You can see it as a distant dot in the void ahead at maximum magnification in your chassis' optics, twinkling with the light of the fires licking across its surface. Its habitats and shipyard facilities are not burning alone. Never that; that would be recoverable, with time and effort. The Diana had set the planet itself on fire. Each of those distant, twinkling lights clustered together on its surface was a fire larger than a continent, rippling over and consuming countless billions of cubic meters of gas with each passing moment. A minute later, and the hawk-hood shape of the Gallipoli's primary bridge blocks it from view in a mass of shadow and metal.

In the same moment, your sensors ping. Fast movers – strike craft off of the carrier on combat air patrol, and coming in quick.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-1-1map.png
Zones given in red represent ingress zones and the Enemy Deployment Zone, zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone, and zones given in green represent the Extraction Zone. The size of terrain is color-coded, examples of which are indicated in increments of height by numbers.

This scene takes place in a **Zero-Gravity Environment** with the **Chassis Mounts** special rule.

CHASSIS MOUNTS

All PCs and NPCs, as well as terrain and distance, are scaled up from normal in a narrative context – chassis wear heavy mounts designed to let them maneuver freely in zero gravity and upscale weapons to the point they can effectively combat strike craft and withstand warship-scale weapons, while strike craft themselves are naturally larger than even a Size 4 would be able to represent at Lancer's normal size scaling. Since these mounts are too large to maneuver inside a ship, they will be jettisoned once the PCs enter an enclosed environment.

CHASSIS MOUNTS

All PCs are not Slowed in Zero Gravity, though they cannot Fly unless they have another system, trait, talent, etc. that allows them to do so, until the end of the scene. Of the listed NPCs in scenes in this module with this special rule, the Ships can still Fly freely, but the Spacers cannot (similarly to PCs).

The PCs begin on the left side of the map after being dropped off by their insertion shuttles, along with the Objective, in the designated Player Deployment Zone. Enemy forces begin on their patrol routes in the Enemy Deployment Zone, between the PDZ and the Extraction Zone at the right end of the map. The map is littered with drifting orbital debris from the delaying actions fought by surviving CDF naval vessels and defenses, which can serve as cover for objects the size of the PCs' mechs.

The goal of the PCs is to bring their breach ram – the Escort Objective – to the SCS-CV *Gallipoli*'s outer hull (here represented by the Extraction Zone) by the eighth round of play, leading to a **PC Victory**. Failure to accomplish this will mean that the PCs cannot pierce through the *Gallipoli*'s hull, and they will have to find an alternative entrance point – the mission cannot continue without the supercarrier disabled in some manner, or its strike craft would tear the PCs apart before they reached the SCS-BB *Diana*.

At the beginning of the scene, the two Grunt Breachers and the Barricade are held within the transport bays of the Veteran Ship Bombard, here representing a Second Committee-era anti-subline missile carrier. Each of the Veteran Ship NPCs in this scene represents a strike craft or dropship deployed from the *Gallipoli*, ranging from bombers like the Rainmaker to more esoteric nanite special weapons craft such as the Hive. The bolded identifiers given are the callsigns of each craft, corresponding to their parent carrier, then Wing H, then their number within the wing.

If playing with 5 PCs, all four Grunt Assaults should be loaded into the Archer on deployment; if playing with 3, you may choose to either start the Mirage inside the Archer or outside depending on whether an opportunity immediately presents itself to use powerful options such as Metafold Shove, but the Seeder should likely be loaded into the Archer with 4 PCs.

In general, the NPCs will seek to complement each other by the strike craft dropping off their chassis and remaining at weapons range while the chassis close to engage the PCs. The strike craft are more heavily armored than the chassis or more maneuverable, between optionals such as Steel Jaw and Lightning Reflexes respectively, and should take advantage of this in their strategy to deal damage and control while their deployed accompaniment harasses and walls in the PCs away from the *Gallipoli*.

The NPCs will not seek to destroy the Objective of their own volition, but if it is destroyed accidentally by PC or NPC action, the scene will end in a **PC Defeat**.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

The players are successfully able to reach the SCS-CV *Gallipoli*'s outer hull with the breach ram intact. They must now make a choice – whether to enter at **Point 7** on the below shipboard map, assaulting the flight deck and launch controls, or to enter at **Point 9**, assaulting the bridge of the ship directly without softening defenses and drawing away hostile chassis beforehand. If they enter at **Point 7**, proceed as standard with **Scene 1-2**. If they enter at **Point 9**, begin **Scene 1-3** with **doubled** Reinforcements, representing the full concentration of internal security forces on the *Gallipoli* being summoned to the bridge.

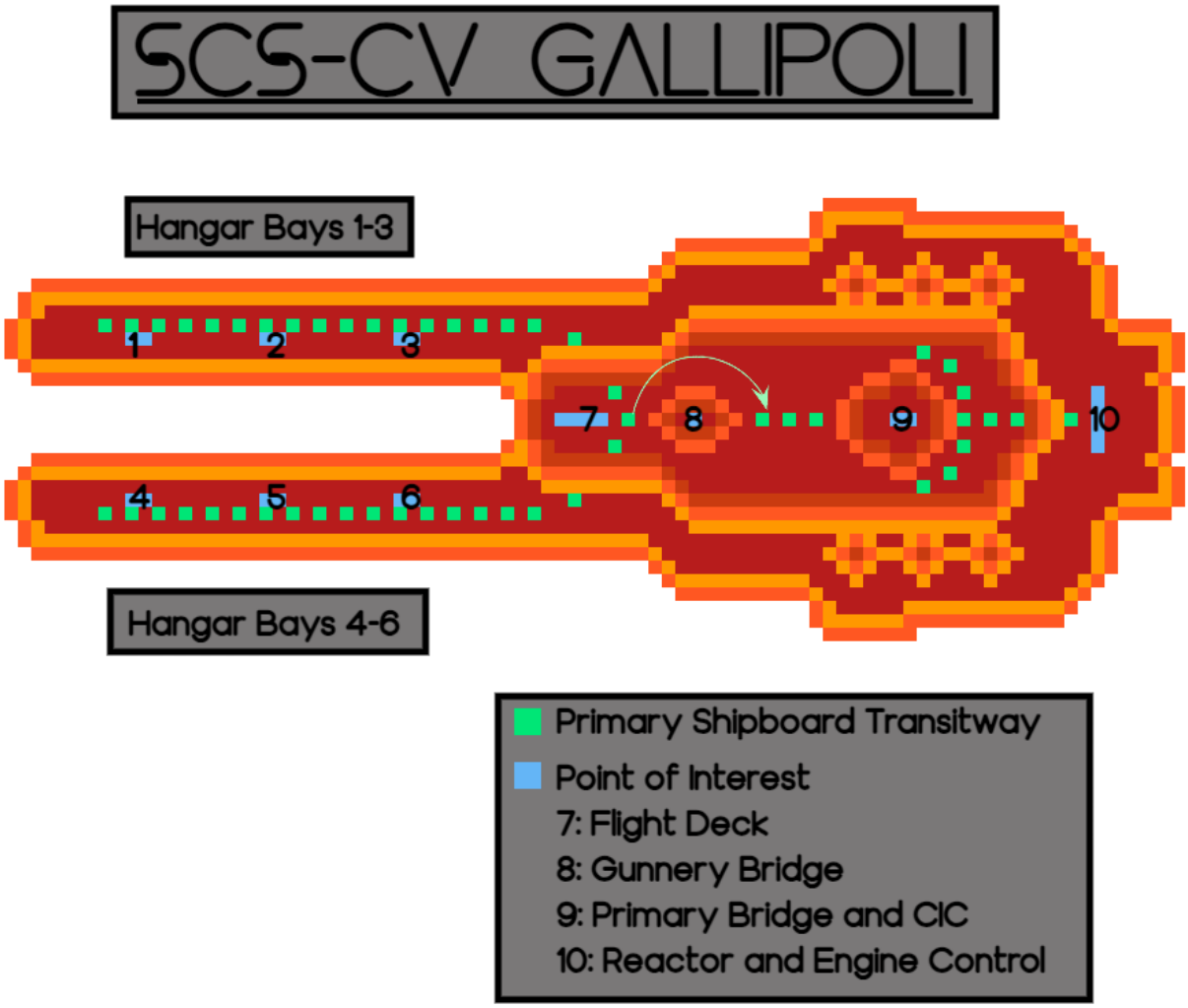
PC DEFEAT

The players are unable to bring the breach ram to the *Gallipoli* before the full force of the enemy fighter screen is turned towards them, resulting in them having to find a different entry point. Without being able to pierce the *Gallipoli*'s hull, they will have to force entry through one of the hangar bays. If they choose to force entry through one of the hangar bays, begin the point-crawl in **Navigating the *Gallipoli*** starting at the hangar bay of their choice (**Point(s) 1-6**), and with an immediate **Shipboard Security Team** random combat encounter.

Depending on which hangar bay they choose (from left to right on either side), select a player at random to roll an **Agility** check 0, 1, or 2 times (selecting a different player each time). On a failure, they take **1d6+6 Explosive damage** from a flak gun on the *Gallipoli* targeting them; on a success, they take **3**. Inform the players of this risk ahead of time, as a tradeoff between either having a longer distance to walk through the ship or risking damage on their approach.

In addition, add **1 segment** to the **Blood of Aulis** Clock.

INTERLUDE: NAVIGATING THE *GALLIPOLI*



Once players have entered the *Gallipoli* or once they're traversing from scene to scene within the ship, they will need to use the Primary Shipboard Transitway – moving as a party along a route shown in the shipboard map above. Players can enter any Point of Interest when on a Primary Shipboard Transitway square no more than one space away, and travel across the transitway one highlighted square at a time. Players may avoid the **Gunnery Bridge** (**Point 8**) unless they wish to trigger **Scene 1-4**, skipping along the arrow shown from one highlighted square to the other. (This counts as moving 1 square for the purpose of the following encounter section.)

For every two highlighted squares traveled on the Primary Shipboard Transitway, ask for a stealth, survival, or other related check from the players in order to remain undetected – the same player cannot roll a

check a second time before all other players in the party have rolled a check. On a **20+**, they are able to continue on their route without complications. On a **10-19**, they are able to proceed along their route, but attract some form of attention or only narrowly evade a patrol: their next travel check is made with +**1 Difficulty**. On a **9 or less**, they immediately incur a random encounter from the below table. Roll **1d6**, or choose according to your preference or what seems most appropriate for the failed check rolled. No rests occur between these encounters, only after each combat scene (that is, after **Scene(s) 1-1**, **1-2**, **1-3**, or **1-4**).

Narrative Encounters can also be given, should a GM so desire it, after any travel check/where relevant instead of just as a result of a 5 on the **Combat Encounters** table. While these are designed to create combat attrition to the PCs' chassis, they can also be replaced with narrative challenges with mechanical consequences, or simply fully-narrative consequences.

COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

1	**Shipboard Security Team**	A collection of armed security subalterns and an accompanying chassis intercept your route, weapons already raised. **Sitrep:** n/a **Forces:** 1x **RPV Squad** (Squad options: Armored; non-Biological), 1x **RPV Sentinel** (Sentinel options: Bodyguard)
2	**Automated Turrets**	Armed turrets have been deployed along this route, and as one, turn towards you with a rattle of fresh ammunition belts. **Sitrep:** n/a **Forces:** 4x Grunt Assault (Assault options: Underslung Grenade Launcher; no Combat Knife, permanently Immobilized)
3	**Emergency Lockdown**	The bulkhead doors have slammed shut on either side of you, trapping you in a room with a dead Worldkiller or Haber. As sirens wail, it begins to wake with a shudder of old limbs. **Sitrep:** n/a **Forces:** 1x **Veteran Pyro** (Pyro options: Superhot; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy to Systems, Steel Jaw, NHP Co-Pilot) *Or* 1x **Veteran Clademaster** (Clademaster options: Chemical Sprayer; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy to Systems, Deadly, NHP Co-Pilot)
4	**Atmosphere Vent**	Somewhere on the ship, security systems trigger a local vent of the atmosphere. In an instant, air and pressure disappear, leaving emergency lights shining on a suddenly silent hallway. The players gain +**1 Difficulty** on their next travel check. In addition, all players are required to make an Engineering check to control their mech reactors in the freezing, airless environment. On a failure, they enter their next combat with Heat equal to half of their Heat Capacity.
5	**Momentary Reprieve**	Despite catching the attention of the ship's automated security systems, some component of the chaos you've caused or the ongoing situation outside seems to have distracted them. For now, you have a moment to rest. The players may Stabilize if they so choose, including clearing the effects of an **Atmosphere Vent** encounter as if they currently had that Heat. In addition, roll once on the **Narrative Encounters** table.
6	**Shipboard Blockade Team**	Security forces in your route have set up blockades to prevent you from moving forward, and aim to slow you down further. **Sitrep:** Gauntlet **Forces:** 1x **RPV Barricade** (Barricade options: Extrudite), 1x **RPV Archer** (Archer options: Blinding Shells)

NARRATIVE ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

1	**Votive Shrine**	A painting's been emblazoned on a corridor wall – a sharp-eyed, olive-skinned woman with her hair pulled back into a tight bun. Her brow is garlanded in fresh-

NARRATIVE ENCOUNTERS

ROLL 1D6

		blooming flowers, and she looks off into the distance as if there's something out there waiting for her. Underneath, someone's scrawled "For Our Lady War". A cluster of battery-powered candles nestle on the floor beneath, lighting it from below; around them lies curled an empty assault hardsuit, its helmet removed and nothing inside. Close examination reveals that the joints are faintly stained with ash.
2	**Weeping Echo**	The sound of someone faintly crying at a distance rings through the halls, before being abruptly drowned out by the keening sound of an emergency siren. The klaxon sounds once, and goes silent; when it fades, so does the sound of crying. No source for either sound can be found.
3	**Posted Propaganda**	A propaganda poster hangs on the wall, slightly faded with time: three heroically posed figures stand with their hands upraised and clasped together, one in a lab coat, one in an industrial worker's coveralls, and one in Second Committee-era Union Marines fatigues. The bottom reads *"SUPPORT THE WORKING CLASS – SUPPORT THE ONE STATE. WE STAND TOGETHER IN HISTORY".*
4	**Public Announcement**	A garbled blurt of noise comes from the shipwide PA system, at first entirely unintelligible. On closer examination, names and ranks can be picked out of the noise – listing off individuals to report to various spaces aboard the vessel, and giving deployment timings for the next set of strike craft to be launched off of the *Gallipoli*'s decks. If the PCs tap into the radio chatter, many of the high-level strategic orders appear to be coming from someone named Ajax.
5	**Old Enemies**	In a larger vestibule, a chunky computer console protrudes from the wall. It's been thoroughly smashed by something, and is entirely inoperable. Sprawled in front of it are two long-since-decayed skeletons in Second Committee naval hardsuits; each sports a shattered faceplate. One has a prominent bullet wound breaking in the front of their skull, while the other has no such visible mark. Both are holding guns, with the one without the head wound slumped against the wall. On close examination, both appear to not just be from the *Gallipoli*'s enlisted crew, but from the same unit in the ship's complement.
6	**Distress Signal**	A SOS comes from Coalition-tagged forces elsewhere in the *Gallipoli*, nearby the players. When they arrive, the engagement has already concluded; friendly chassis lie scattered and cold around the transitway. On close examination, the wounds seem to have been primarily caused with some kind of high-heat melee weapon or an armor-piercing plasma weapon, and the distribution of the wrecks show that some of them were thrown about with extreme force. The players may also find a survivor inside one of the wrecks – if they are capable of effecting first aid, the survivor is able to inform them that their assailants appeared as if out of thin air before disappearing again, and were about comparable in skill to the elites of their faction (such as notable chassis units of the CDF, Legion SOF, or DoJ/HR operatives). If they are not, then the survivor perishes without being able to provide much in the way of useful information.

As well, this point is a good time to begin setting up the mystery of the Dead Fleet – if players use the Scan action from this point on an NPC, it may be a good idea to remark that there are no life signs detected inside the enemy mech or hardsuit(s). If they take the initiative in any scenes with access to the *Gallipoli*'s computer systems (**Scene(s) 1-2, 1-3, 1-4** if victorious) to run a life-signs scan on the ship, inform them that there are no life signs anywhere on the ship that don't have a Coalition IFF tag. (It may be good to require a Hack or Fix or similar check in order to do this.) In fact, if the players take the opportunity to pry open the cockpits of any of the chassis they encounter, they would find them bare – well-maintained, if incredibly old, but with no signs of any presence inside. Judicious use of the **Narrative Encounters** table, including taking events from the table and distributing them across the point-crawl, should also help add context to these circumstances. Overall, prompt players to consider how the well-equipped, focused, and capable enemies they've been facing so far could seemingly not be alive, and how (by identification, scanning, etc.) it's also clear some of them should have been human pilots or Marines.

SECOND COMMITTEE IDENTIFIERS

Second Committee forces are characteristically made up of bulky, brutalist chassis larger than their modern counterparts, heavily armored and armed to the point of practically radiating aggression. Most have camouflage in standard Navy dark grey/light

SECOND COMMITTEE IDENTIFIERS

grey dapple meant to blend in against urban/shipboard environments and spaceborne objects, though some uniquely have very dark grey matte paint with black accents – these are Rangers, special-operations troops of the Second Committee's military. Most chassis will have a characteristic dark blue and black paired identification stripe somewhere on the upper arm, though in exceptionally rare cases, this'll be cut across at the middle with a gray-blue diagonal stripe. Such signifies a member of the Council of Military Commissars, and thus a member of the anthrochauvinist elite and a committed political officer of the regime. Hardsuits – the predecessors of chassis – ran the gamut from the fearsomely aggressive REDWOOD vanguard vacsuit and its auxiliary backpack weapons generator down to the MISTLETOE special forces reconnaissance and infiltration rig, oft accompanied late in the Revolution by skeletal, up-armored Project Terracotta manpower-supplement combat subalterns.

The Union tricolor flag of the period incorporated three stripes of lighter blue, darker blue, and black as shown below, tilted at a 23.5-degree angle (that is, the measure of Cradle's axial tilt); the symbol of the period was a simplified phoenix drawn in white, its wings proudly raised. In some cases, as on certain versions of the flag, it appeared in black instead. Both tricolor and phoenix appear on SecComm equipment.

In terms of divisions, the Second Committee's military (aside from the Rangers and the Commissariat, which held themselves somewhat apart) was split into three separate but closely related branches: the Navy, the Marines, and the Naval Air Arm. Typically, all ship-to-ship operating chassis belonged to the Navy, while shipboard security teams, boarding chassis, intervention forces, and regular infantry belonged to the Marines. The Naval Air Arm incorporated strike craft, bombers, fighters, and other heavy ordnance-carrying craft designed for long-flight missions, usually ship-to-ship or orbit-to-ground.

In general, Second Committee armor remains mass-manufacture uniform, a sign of the lack of individuality emphasized from a regime and ideological perspective. Highly ranked or very

SECOND COMMITTEE IDENTIFIERS

honored soldiers may be given the option to adorn their hardsuits or chassis with a few small decorations, such as aiguillettes of silver or brass wire, strips of rich dark blue cloth, or metal studs to denote years of service.

SCENE 1-2:
DECKSWEEPERS

SITREP:	Gauntlet (*Lancer* p.271)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Aegis** (Aegis options: Ring of Fire, Hardlight Cover System) 1x **Elite Sniper** (Sniper options: Selective Loader, Moving Target; Scout equipment: Sight)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Sentinel** (Sentinel options: Punisher Ammunition)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Demolisher** (Goliath options: Crushing Embrace)
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Elite Spite** (Spite options: Entrenched, Feedback Shield)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Breacher** (Breacher options: Follower Count)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 4x **Grunt Berserkers**

As you enter the flight deck, you're greeted with the sight of a vast, cavernous chamber lined with running lights, stretching out on your left towards the void of space and on your right towards a heavily armored back wall and series of catwalks leading to deck entrances. Of course, "left" and "right" are relative – since you entered the Gallipoli, you've been on thrust gravity, a constant about-one-g from the massive warship's engines pushing it forward. Those directions would normally be up and down, but the lack of any other reference frame's twisted matters into a more palatable viewpoint.

Lining the flight deck is a set of strike craft like the ones you fought while trying to get to the Gallipoli, being re-armed by utility chassis and sets of subalterns. Massive bombs and missiles are tugged into place towards munitions bays and external hardpoints, while fresh batteries and ammunition belts are supplied for fixed and turreted guns. Chassis could be launched from the Gallipoli's hangar bays, but for mass carrier operations, this flight deck is the only real place to carry them out – which is precisely why you're here.

At the far end of the flight deck sits a squat control tower, glaring down the length of the deck towards the hole that leads out into space. For a moment, you think you might see a distant gleam through the windows…

… and then a supersonic crack rings through the air as a sniper's round just misses one of you, burying itself several inches deep in the solid metal bulkhead behind. A moment later, emergency alarms start wailing. Looks like you're on a tight schedule, and it's not going to take long before the sniper's reloaded.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-1-2map_shortened.png
Zones given in red represent ingress zones and the Enemy Deployment Zone, zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone, and zones given in green represent the Extraction Zone. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding. Blue lines represent windows/**Bulkhead Doors** to the air traffic control area; the front are windows two spaces off the ground, the sides are **Bulkhead Doors** one space off of the one-space-high set of stairs leading up to the doors. Windows are destroyed if the Sniper shoots through them; otherwise, they are 10HP objects.

The spacecraft lining the runway are Height 3 all around.

BULKHEAD DOORS

Bulkhead Doors are objects with 10 HP, 1 Armor, Evasion 5, and E-Defense 10. They can be closed or opened by NPCs as a Quick Action when adjacent or by PCs as a Quick Tech, and start closed unless stated otherwise. When closed, they cannot be passed through; when opened, they can. When destroyed, they are removed. Certain events may leave Bulkhead Doors as permanently locked open, closed, etc. Bulkhead Doors do not count for additional damage or effects for the purpose of rules such as the Bombard NPC's Cluster Munitions trait.

The PCs begin on the left side of the map, facing down a fortified Control Zone on the right side of the map representing an air traffic control section. This Section is Height 4, but can be entered from the stairs (Height 1) or by climbing up to Height 2; the space within then goes up a further Height 2, acting as a building with an interior that can fit up to Size 2 mechs (or an **Enclosed Environment** (see p. 32) with a ceiling height of Height 2). This Control Zone contains the starting NPC detachment, as well as the crucial launch controls required to maintain flight deck operations – if the PCs are able to maintain control of the area, they'll be able to prevent the *Gallipoli* effectively re-launching strike craft and chassis off of its main deck, significantly degrading its ability to interfere with the evacuation of Lebaea. However, if they're pushed back, the enemy will be able to continue flight operations with the valuable equipment in the raised Control Zone – the damage the fight causes to the flight deck will still be problematic, but not sufficiently to prevent the *Gallipoli* from interfering in the evacuation on its own.

The Sniper is a deadly threat from within the air traffic control area – especially paired with the Aegis and Sentinel, it's capable of raining down crippling damage on the PCs as they attempt to approach. However, the strike craft and other equipment littered around the flight deck act as cover and means to break the Sniper's line of sight on their approach, unless they're inclined to try to engage it in a duel of ranged combatants. The Aegis generally should not deploy its shield immediately, instead waiting for the PCs to determine a strategy of approach to the Sniper and then deploying proactively to block that route. However, if the PCs have a significant ranged threat, it may be a good idea to preserve the Sniper's threat for as long as possible and thus deploy the shield.

When it comes to reinforcements, the Spite and its retinue should enter from behind the PCs and pursue them, pinning the PCs between the fortified air traffic control area and the rapidly approaching enemies seeking to flush them out of cover. The Spite is especially valuable in this instance, acting as a means to punish the PCs for Overcharging or otherwise pushing their Heat Capacity in order to move up the field or engage the Sniper.

Consider placing some **Size 2** fuel tanks or munitions piles around on the map; clearly denote which ones are "active". When these are destroyed, they go up in a **Burst 1** explosion, dealing **2d6 Explosive Damage** to anyone in the area (**Agility** check for half). As well, they leave **Difficult Terrain** and **Dangerous Terrain** (which deals **2 Burn**) behind in their previous spaces for the rest of the scene.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

The PCs are able to successfully hold the air traffic control station for long enough to disrupt the *Gallipoli*'s launch and recovery operations, as well as deal sufficient damage to its systems without being interrupted by shipboard forces that it'll buy significant time for the evacuation efforts on Lebaea. Between that and the chaos caused on the flight deck itself, it'll be very difficult for the *Gallipoli* to keep up the operational tempo it had before, or the combat air patrol screen it was putting up for other elements of its battlegroup. **Add 4 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock.**

Additionally, if the PCs wish to explore in more depth, they may discover that the Elite Sniper was the watch officer for the air control station (one **LCdr. O'Rourke**, Union Naval Air Arm). A variety of successful checks should allow them to pull his identification, ranging from a Hack or Fix to electronically obtain it to other checks in order to find the IFF tag in his mech (if possible). They may wish to use this to get into the station's systems more easily or to listen in to enemy communications, but keep track of how long this takes – reinforcements will be arriving shortly, and remind the players of this to keep the time pressure on. Allow checks such as Blow Something Up and the judicious use of pilot gear to jam the doors from deeper into the ship into the flight deck to buy more time.

PC DEFEAT

The PCs are unable to seize control of the air traffic control station, and are forced out of the flight deck and deeper into the ship's corridors and hallways. However, they've managed to cause a fair amount of damage and chaos on the flight deck, as well as the fight itself interrupting launch operations briefly – that's at least a small dent in the *Gallipoli*'s capabilities before it's back in full swing again. **Add 1 segment to the Blood of Aulis Clock, and 2 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock.**

SCENE 1-3:
NAVIGATIONAL ERROR

SITREP:	Holdout, Modified (*Lancer* p.272, changes described below)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Ultra Commander Avenger** (Avenger options: Mimic Mesh; Commander options: Bolster Network; Ultra options: Superior Reactor, Superior Melee; Bastion options: Heavy Assault Shield, Veteran options: NHP Co-Pilot; remove the Assault Armor trait for the Commander option Press the Attack) ***AJAX, Crowsworn Somatophylax*** 1x **Goliath** (Goliath options: Power Knuckle)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Engineer** (Engineer options: Power Deployer) Add 1x **Support** (Support options: Latch Drone) Add 1x **Veteran Breacher** (Breacher options: Superior Ram, Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Engineering, Limitless, Lightning Reflexes)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Archer** (Archer options: Covering Fire, Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Headshot, Slippery) Add 1x **Veteran Squad** (Squad options: Disciplined; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Lesser Sight; Pirate options: Prying Claws; non-Biological)
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	2x **RPV Squad** (Squad options: Disciplined, Armored; non-Biological)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Clademaster** (Clademaster options: Self-Replicating Vectors, Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Feign Death, Parting Gift)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Bastion** (Bastion options: Near-Threat Denial System) Add 1x **Spectre** (Spectre options: Weakness Analyzer)

The bridge is absolutely massive – not only is it more than large enough to fit a mech chassis between the serried ranks of work consoles and humming server banks, but the armored-composite "glass" windows that stretch far above the bridge provide an unparalleled view of the battle outside and the Gallipoli's twin hulls stretching out for kilometers far below. Tiny flashes of light through the glass represent weapons discharges and the last breaths of chassis reactors guttering out in the void; hundreds, if not thousands, of lives from the Coalition and the Second Committee's forces are little more than embers strewn out across the black sky. The ship rumbles faintly under your feet as its immense engines push it on a new maneuver, and the tableau changes through the windows inch by inch.

Beneath those windows, in front of the rows of unmanned workstations, stands your goal: central control for the Gallipoli's navigational systems, marked by a "NAVIGATION" stamp on one of the structural support pillars running through the space. However, upon a raised dais nearby stands something else entirely: a chassis in the grey-dapple of the Second Committee, an immense shield leaning against its leg and a heavy pistol at its hip, marked with the upraised-chalice badge of some ancient regiment. It's leant over, deep in conversation with someone else similarly suited up in their own mech, but it straightens up as it appears to notice your entrance.

"You," it says, its voice laden with rough-edged static. The rattle of guns being raised echoes off the bridge's walls.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-1-3map.png

Zones given in red represent the Enemy Deployment Zones/ingress zones, zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone, and zones given in green represent the Control Zone. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding; terrain that only supplies soft cover will have a lowercase S after the number. Blue lines represent **Bulkhead Doors** (see p. 29) in the environment.

Double* all Reinforcements if the players are doing this scene as their first upon entry to the *Gallipoli (per the choice at the end of **Scene 1-1**).

The primary change from a default Holdout is that the players do not start on the Control Zone. They will have to reach the Control Zone themselves, which represents the primary steering and navigation controls for the *Gallipoli*, and then hold it as normal for a Holdout sitrep. Additionally, the **Enclosed Environment** modifier is in place for the bridge, as well as the surrounding rooms and hallways included in the map, with ceilings of Height 5 and Height 3 respectively.

AJAX and up to half of the starting NPCs (rounding up) may start within the dark colored area on the bridge instead of in one of the red enemy deployment zones.

Finally, using the standard rules for breaking wall sections, both players and NPCs will be able to break through the wall section between the bridge floor and space (shown by the black spaces on the map). This represents destroying a section of the armored glass that acts as the bridge's windows. **If one of these sections is broken, all characters on the Bridge side of the map will have to make a Hull check or be pulled 3 spaces towards the hole and be knocked Prone.** On a success, they are only pulled 3 spaces. This counts as involuntary movement. All characters will have +1 Difficulty on this check unless they have systems, traits, talents, etc. (i.e., Stable Structure, High-Stress Mag Clamps…) which would aid in standing still in a depressurizing environment. If a character is capable of flight, they automatically pass the check. If a character is pulled through the hole by this movement, they are sucked out into space: they are removed from the map until the end of their next turn or the end of the round (whichever comes first), where they manage to make it back to the bridge and thus may be placed by their controller in any free, valid area adjacent to the hole.

ENCLOSED ENVIRONMENT

Enclosed Environments represent rooms, hallways, and similar within a closed area. As such, it is impossible to fly over a given ceiling height (which will be specified in the scene details for a scene with this modifier) or enter an area with a ceiling height smaller than your Size, nor to cross over walls between rooms – they are floor-to-ceiling unless otherwise specified. However, some walls may be destructible, allowing for their removal and passage between various enclosed areas; many Enclosed Environments will also feature Bulkhead Doors (see p. 29) to allow traversal without destroying intervening terrain. It is recommended that individual one-hex wall segments be objects with 10 HP, 1 Armor, Evasion 5, and immunity to Tech Actions. Walls or wall segments do not count for additional damage or effects for the purpose of rules such as the Bombard NPC's Cluster Munitions trait.

The primary enemy that the PCs will be faced with in this scene is ***AJAX** (he/him)*, the first member of the Crowsworn Somatophylakes that they will have seen so far – though they may have heard rumors about them beforehand, through sightings of AJAX by Coalition forces over their communications lines. The Crowsworn are Iphigenia's personal honor guard, each heroes of the Second Committee (some of the few Deimosian NHPs to achieve such a coveted position). Through the nature of their existence as NHPs, the Crowsworn – named after one of Iphigenia's titles, "the Queen of Crows" – are bound to their mistress eternally, long past where death or retirement would have claimed any human companion.

When the PCs see AJAX, he will be looking out across the *Gallipoli*'s hull towards Lebaea from the bridge windows before turning to face them. In appearance, his mono-eyed, grey-painted chassis is similar to a slimmed-down version of the modern IPS-N *Tortuga*, bearing an officer's revolving pistol upon the thigh-plating and a bulky omninode over the back – and a massive boarding shield leaning upon his leg, battered and scarred with the signs of battle. A bolt of dark blue cloth swathes the surface, as well as preserved fragments of flowers woven by the stem through the anti-ballistic netting that covers the shield. The only other form of decoration on the chassis is the black painted feathers that run down its back in the shape of a carrion bird's great wings.

AJAX will pick up the shield as the PCs approach, magnetically locking it to his chassis's arm and drawing his pistol from his side, and greet them cordially but with conviction. If the PCs open fire immediately, AJAX will respond in kind and the combat will begin, and he will also command the other elements of his immediate guard to attack if the PCs attempt to advance outside of the Player Deployment Zone – otherwise, however, he will engage in dialogue with the PCs. You may use this opportunity to provide hints towards Iphigenia herself, the rest of the Crowsworn, or simply to shed light on anthrochauvinism as a belief system or the Second Committee as a whole.

ROLEPLAYING ANTHROCHAUVINISTS

These should be considered to be guidelines more than rules, to be modified dependent on table and elaborated upon to introduce additional nuance dependent on each character's personality and their interactions with your players. However, in broadest strokes:

Anthrochauvinism is an ideology of action. A hardline believer will often affirm the conclusions of their beliefs by the use of direct action, and eschew "white-room" thinking as weak or inapplicable to the problems of society. Particularly well-educated

ROLEPLAYING ANTHROCHAUVINISTS

anthrochauvinists will be familiar with the theories underlying their ideology (primary-attributes monoculturalism, post-Filter Cradelian culture theory, the moral imperative of expansion), but even then, theory is perceived to only be useful in the context that it justifies and forwards actions. This may be considered in the context of two principles: "ideology-in-action" and "action-in-ideology".

Anthrochauvinism de-emphasizes the individual. The value of an individual person is thought to be negligible next to the value of the (deliberately) nebulous People; it is this idea of "all humanity" that anthrochauvinism seeks to preserve. As such, anthrochauvinists will direct most of their appeals to this idea of humanity *en masse*, and often disregard appeals based upon the inherent value of an individual's dignity or life – including to their own. While martyrdom is not *per se* idealized in anthrochauvinist thought, the tacit endorsement of martyrdom is common.

The beauty of an idea is one of its merits. Anthrochauvinism, to a believer, is a beautiful idea – something worth struggling to bring into the world, and something eventually worth dying for. Indeed, a common dig against the non-interventionist utopianism of the First Committee was that the ideology possessed no beauty; it was something that could produce no heroes or great figures, and of which no great works of poetry or philosophy could be made. Especially given its focus on Cradelian culture, anthrochauvinism is at once a brutalist ideology with a utilitarian values bent, and one which has appropriated for itself romantic concepts and themes.

To the anthrochauvinist, they are a savior. However abhorrent their deeds or practices when applied, most Second Committee-era hardliners genuinely believe in the cause, and in the idea that they are ensuring the survival of the species and liberating the downtrodden Diaspora. While "anthrochauvinism for the sake of the self" is far more often practiced by modern "cryptochauvs" in 5016u, the millennium and a half of political hegemony and immense social pressure represented by the Second Committee meant that many of its products were legitimately devoted to their beliefs – even when it comes to instances of mass murder such as TBK procedures. The anthrochauvinist may proverbially wipe away a tear, but under the guise of "what needs be done," they will still commit horrific acts and deem themselves in the right for having done so.

Anthrochauvinism is paternalistic. Occasionally to the point of outright condescension, but always

ROLEPLAYING ANTHROCHAUVINISTS

with an attitude of knowing better than those who would disagree. The average anthrochauvinist believes themselves backed by not just the centuries the Second Committee spent as hegemon, but by the entire legacy of human history since the first hominids on Cradle they have laid claim to. In the context of this, they often believe all disagreements with their ideology or its necessity to be the product of immaturity or childishness, and that those who object will inevitably "come to see it their way" in sufficient time.

As a short summary of character, AJAX is a courageous individual with great personal strength – primarily focused on defending the crew of the *Gallipoli* and his compatriots instead of taking to the offense. He is undeniably a hardline anthrochauvinist (as is required of the heroes of the State), but quiet in that particular line of belief unless it is specifically brought up by the PCs or TBK doctrine is addressed, which he will defend as an exigency of the Second Committee and the One State, as well as an unrefusable request from "Lady Iphigenia". His primary concern is persuading the PCs to lay down their weapons and retreat, and he will explicitly state that they will not be harmed should they choose to surrender. They will be escorted back to their home, and thus subject to the TBK action along with the rest of the Choral Worlds, but in AJAX's eyes, this "would be a good death" – an acceptance of the sins of one's ancestors and of the "necessity" of dying for a greater good. In addition, he does not believe this counts as breaking an oath on his part not to harm them, since the TBK is a wholly impersonal act. A good reference point for this is the idea that AJAX would urge the PCs to return home in order to have an honorable death among their families and friends, instead of forcing him to kill them now – that their goal is, ultimately, pointless and unachievable against the might of an entire fleet.

Should they refuse this "offer," he takes up the task of killing them with regret, but with complete self-assurance in being able to do so, and determination in the task of protecting the *Gallipoli*'s bridge. In his eyes, he is a good soldier of Union, and aims to hold himself to that – a contrast that can be sharply drawn against any Third Committee Union personnel among the PCs. To wit, in the thematic notes that each of the Crowsworn represent an aspect of complicity with genocide, AJAX represents complicity-by-ideology: "acceptable sacrifice for the greater good".

This also reflects in AJAX's combat choices: he will seek to protect the Control Zone over all else, and prefers to engage in melee combat with his shield when possible. Against powerful ranged enemies, he will attempt to take cover and force them to approach; against melee and close-range enemies, he will

attempt to close the distance using Mimic Mesh and force them away from the CZ and his allies.

When it comes to said allies, the Squads will attempt to fill space in the hallways and force the PCs to slowly and painfully push through them – especially the Veteran Squad, which can easily take advantage of the tight conditions of the fight and players not expecting melee interaction to start climbing their chassis and prying open their cockpit. Use this as a teachable moment for why many mechs are accompanied by infantry screens, and how dangerous it is to be alone next to a dozen infantrymen with breach cutters and hammers. Much the same goes for the Engineer and the Archer – they'll seek to lock down pathways to the CZ and prevent PCs from being able to reliably engage what will rapidly become a heavily fortified area. If the PCs allow the NPCs to reach the CZ first, the sitrep becomes far more painful to push a victory through.

In contrast, the Breacher, Spectre, and Clademaster are designed to clear out the CZ once the PCs have laid claim to it. Surprise a player by using the Breacher to ram clear through the walls inside the bridge to hit them, or use the Clademaster to fill the CZ with poison gas that'll force the players to choose between continuing to hold the sitrep objective or taking heavy damage.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

If the PCs successfully claim the *Gallipoli*'s bridge and navigational controls, they'll be able to either set the supercarrier to drift back towards Patrae or out of the system – effectively removing it from the battle for Lebaea, though not for several hours yet due to the magnitude of the distances involved – or outright set it on a collision course for the SCS-LS *Sakharov*. If they inquire as to using it to ram the SCS-BB *Diana* instead, explain that the far greater magnitude of weapons on the battleship would mean that the ram would not successfully make impact, since the *Diana* would likely shoot the runaway *Gallipoli* down. Outline both choices to the players explicitly if necessary, or just remind them of the situation and allow the decisions to come naturally. **Add 6 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock.**

As well, if the PCs successfully achieve victory, they encounter a new character on the bridge: ***Asteria*** *(she/her).*

She only manifests, as an incorporeal hologram, after the fighting has concluded – an olive-skinned, slight woman in the uniform of a Union Navy lieutenant of the Second Committee era, with a medal (a thin silver crescent) pinned to her chest for excellence in coordination of flight operations. She will not acknowledge the players' presence until or unless they engage with her directly or catch her attention, instead staring out into the void through the bridge's armored windows.

Though the players do not know this, she is a partition of Iphigenia herself – one which wholly believes herself to be her own person, and an Iphigenia-class NHP assigned to the *Gallipoli* as its lead air control officer. Indeed, in terms of physical appearance, she bears great resemblance to Iphigenia – though such could easily be mistaken by the players as a mother/daughter or sister/sister similarity. Characters who are NHP technicians or NHPs themselves (or other permutations thereof) may, however, be able to determine that something is wrong with how Asteria presents herself the more she interacts with the players: the primary clue in that regard is that, unlike the digital link between NHP and secure casket that would be normal, there does not appear to be an identifiable casket anywhere nearby (typically something that would be checked by electronic means, as a ship NHP would have their casket in a secure location).

In terms of personality, Asteria is distant to the point of being distracted – it's obvious that her attention is somewhere else, and remains so. A close examination of her projection with respect to the ongoing space battle outside would reveal that her fingers are dancing at her side in sync with the movements of the drone strike craft outside, as if she's personally conducting their movements akin to a musical piece. Otherwise, her interactions and tone are haughtily cordial: to her, the players must appear to be something akin to a mosquito buzzing about her head, a comparatively far smaller number of variables to work through compared to the pitched battle she's still coordinating. If the players have completed **Scene 1-4** already and gained control of the *Gallipoli*'s guns, her cordiality is limited at best, instead underlaid with a kind of impersonal disgust – and, in both cases, the longer the conversation stretches on, the thinner that guise grows before snapping altogether into terse anger and then Asteria demanifesting altogether.

Similarly, Asteria will demanifest if the players attempt to harm her, though – being a projection – such would have little effect regardless, and she has little tolerance for direct insults. On the subject of AJAX after the players' victory, should they have killed him, she'll mention that *"Mother will be rather irritated about that,"* and that *"At the very least, he did die a good death. Such is all we can ask for in this world."* If AJAX is still alive, however, AJAX and Asteria engage in dialogue instead, bouncing off of each other and the party as AJAX seeks to locate the players and stop them from disabling the *Gallipoli*.

Meeting Asteria is meant to be the players' first introduction to Iphigenia as a character, though they are not yet aware of it being the woman herself (or may have some suspicions thereof). Use this opportunity to lay foreshadowing for the mystery of the Dead Fleet as a whole, as well as get them familiarized with the

overall antagonist of the module at her “peak” – from here, depending on the players’ actions (success or failure), either that curt irritation and anger will come to the fore (and worsen), or the Second Committee’s conditioning and psychological shackling mechanisms will begin to fail, baring the regrets and shame beneath.

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs fail to keep control of the *Gallipoli*’s bridge, they have caused sufficient chaos and damage to still disrupt operations, but their actual impact on the working of the supercarrier will be minimal. If they destroy AJAX, that is still a victory of a kind, but without access to the navigational controls, the supercarrier will still be able to continue its lethal work in the hours to come. **If the players did not destroy AJAX, add 2 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock; if they did, add 4 segments. Add 2 segments to the Blood of Aulis Clock.**

If the players accepted AJAX’s offer of surrender, the mission immediately ends – along with the module. They are stripped of their mechs, armor, and weapons, and sent back down via shuttle to Lebaea to await the coming TBK. Without the intervention of the PCs, the coalition’s struggle is valiant but ultimately doomed, and billions – including the PCs – will die over the coming days.

SCENE 1-4:
FISTFUL OF ARROWS

SITREP:	Recon (*Lancer* p.273)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	2x **Veteran Spec Op Berserker** (Berserker options: Juggernaut; Spec Op options: Null Perception Coating; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Limitless, Headshot) ***171st Union Rangers "Heartbreakers," 171-B (SSgt. McNamara) and 171-C (SSgt. Raines)*** 1x **Support** (Support options: Remote Reboot)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Spec Op Operator** (Swap the Self-Erasure trait for the Metafold Shove optional from the Mirage NPC; Spec Op options: Automated Battlefield Awareness Node; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Hacker) ***171-A (Cpt. Al-Ibrahim)***
FOR 5 PCS:	Add the **ELITE** template to the **Support** Add 4x **Grunt Assault**
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3-5 PCS:	N/A

As the lift heading up to the gunnery bridge slows to a stop, the massive doors at the top slide into view – imposing and dotted with flickering lights that cast the lift in shifting shadows off of each chassis. When the doors grind open, however – the lights flicker out in a wash of sparks. For a moment, you catch a glimpse of a dense warren of structural pillars, gunnery consoles, and subdivided rooms before it all goes dark, lit now only by the faintly dull glow of holographic interfaces.

When night-vision and thermals kick in, there are things in the dark.

Painted in a grey so close to black it blends in with the shadows; dull on your sensors, to the point locks simply slide off of their bulky frames. Behind them trail meter-long talons, scraping against the steel decking in a slow, sickly screech.

Enkidu.

Behind you, the doors slam shut, sealing you in the darkness.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-1-4map.png
Zones given in red represent the Enemy Deployment Zone, zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone, and zones given in green represent the Control Zones. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding; terrain that only supplies soft cover will have a lowercase S after the number. Blue lines represent **Bulkhead Doors** (see p. 29) in the environment.

This scene takes place in an **Enclosed Environment** (see p. 32) with a ceiling height of 3. As well, this is a **Dark Environment**. Due to the necessity of relying on sensors and night-vision equipment, **all ranged attacks outside of a character's Sensors take +1 Difficulty**. The **true CZ** is the one **on the upper right of the map**.

The bottom left room is a plotting and trajectory correction room, where computers and trained professionals would take the data from the *Gallipoli*'s sensors after light-hours of transit across the void and feed it into the next volley. The top left room is an ammunition and power feed tracking room, for ensuring the readiness and proper maintenance of the ship's primary batteries. The bottom right had apparently been struck by a bit of fast-moving debris from the exterior space battle: the interior is trashed, and there's a hole in the side steadily leaking atmosphere, though the ongoing thrust gravity of the *Gallipoli* means that the depressurization has no mechanical effect.

By and large, this is a straightforward sitrep: The players will have to sneak through the sealed rooms around the bridge to find and identify the still-active consoles they can tap into, all the while being hunted by the Union Rangers special-operations squad lurking in the dark. The Operator's task as an NPC is to disrupt this search and the players' attempts to consolidate their forces to focus fire the Berserkers, if it's available; much the same goes for the Support and the Grunt Assaults. The two Berserkers are the majority of your

striking power and the driving force behind the sitrep's threats; the other pieces in Enemy Forces are designed to set up the Berserkers for greatest effectiveness and distract the players, with the Mirage taking occasional potshots.

On the subject of the Operator, it's crucial to keep it behind cover but within Range 8 and with line of sight to its Berserker comrades – the Automated Battlefield Awareness Node lets them auto-pass many saves that would otherwise break their Stampede Defense, keeping their resilience intact. Despite the power of its Raptor Plasma Rifle, it's still not as hard-hitting as its companions, and thus both fragile and more valuable helping its allies as a force multiplier; don't fall prey to the trap of focusing on damage to the exclusion of the NPCs defending the gunnery bridge.

However, one of the best opportunities for the Operator is set up by a 1/scene combo from each of the Berserkers. Given the on-crit effect of the Chain Axe Shredding its targets, and Active Camo providing a guaranteed crit when activated, each Berserker is capable of setting up a brutal Shred combo (with additional damage) into a potential double Operator turn with its plasma rifle. Additionally, the Headshot optional on the Berserkers will ensure that any player who gets struck by this combo will be blinded, opening up opportunities for the Operators to engage with heavy ranged hitters without reprisal.

Given this, emphasize for your players that engaging the Rangers is not in their best interest, especially considering the attrition of moving through the *Gallipoli* – instead, entice them to focus on the objective, and play the Rangers as aiming to pick each member of the party off one by one from the shadows. Imply to the players that they can hack the doors for their own use, and temporarily lock the rampaging Berserkers in closed environments to allow them freer movement.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

With a successful identification of the correct zone on the bridge that allows them to establish an uplink to the *Gallipoli*'s systems, the PCs are able to temporarily redirect command of its gunnery controls to them – including the lighting and doors. Any surviving members of the Ranger detachment scatter elsewhere into the ship to fight another day, and the PCs are left with a decision as to what to do with the *Gallipoli*'s main armament. The simplest option is to just shut down the supercarrier's primary batteries, rendering it unable to provide fire support for its remaining wings against the Coalition's forces – eventually, the crew of the *Gallipoli* might be able to fix it, but such would likely already be too late to prevent Coalition forces gaining significant ground in destroying its wing complement and pushing for the *Diana*.

Alternatively, you may wish to allow the PCs to temporarily control the *Gallipoli*'s guns (possibly with a Hack or Fix or similar additional check to gain additional control, or Assault or Blow Something Up to properly aim them), especially if the PCs were already victorious in **Scene 1-3** (and thus it's unlikely anyone in the primary CIC could take control back).

If the PCs choose to use the *Gallipoli*'s guns, they could shoot at either the *Diana* or the *Sakharov*; firing at the *Diana* allows each party member to gain a one-time use of the **Bombardment Reserve** to be used during **Mission 2**. This represents guided kinetic shots that can be routed to hit targets of the PCs' desire on the *Diana*, fired from the *Gallipoli*'s guns. On the other hand, firing at the *Sakharov* results in the Second Committee frigate suffering substantial damage, meaning it will have to pull away from the battle zone and retreat even without the threat of the *Gallipoli* falling on a collision course with it (see **Scene 1-3**). If players have already been victorious in **Scene 1-3** and chosen to set the supercarrier on a collision course with the frigate, firing at the *Sakharov* and the near-miss ram by the *Gallipoli* will result in the frigate's practical obliteration, completely removing it from the proverbial strategic board.
Either way, **add 4 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock**.

Additionally, there are weapons lockers close by the gunnery bridge – scavenging these for supplies allows the party as a whole to gain **1d3 Repairs**, distributed among individual players as desired. Note that full-scale mech repair bays for the shipboard security teams are closer to the primary bridge and CIC, as that's what they want to protect most. If the players have any Bond Powers such as Go For A Walk to use in this endeavor, give the party a fixed **2 or 3 Repairs** instead of rolling.

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs fail to gain control of the bridge's systems, they're forced away by the Ranger detachment and forced to retreat back into the shipboard transitway. They are not pursued – the spec-ops team is more interested in continuing to hold the gunnery bridge against any other Coalition boarders, especially if the PCs have inflicted heavy losses on them – but they will not have gained any access to the *Gallipoli*'s guns. **Add 2 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock and 1 segment to the Blood of Aulis Clock**, to represent the PCs having still damaged valuable systems and drained further shipboard security forces aboard the ship through the combat.

SCENE 1-5:
TERMINAL BURN

INTERMISSION

You're going to die. That's pretty great, isn't it?

Accepting that is the first part. There was no grand pre-battle speech when everyone was climbing in their mechs, or during the opening briefing. So, instead, you tell it to yourself. You're going to die, so there's no worry about gunning the jump jets, or about sticking your head up at a bad time; there's shame in curling up behind a bulkhead, because you're going to die, and that means you're going to take less of them with you beforehand.

Four hours in of grinding void-borne combat and then fighting corridor-to-corridor through the Gallipoli*, and you start to feel like you're dead already. Dismounting the chassis has a curious feeling of lightness to it; finding a second to finish a sandwich in clumsy hardsuited fingers, clap Wren on the back and tell them they did a good job blowing out the back of that Worldkiller's cockpit, tell Jackson to cut the shit and get back to the medic station being held on the first breach layer, and on and on becomes dreamlike. But then, there's no problem with that.*

That way, you don't feel the grind of bone in your leg when you put too much weight on it (grav-hammer to the weapons arm, crushed your rifle back into you); that way, you can ignore the dull, throbbing hum somewhere behind your eyes (basilisk exposure? stress headache? weapons discharge?). Things like that just don't show up in dreams.

Shot of half-watered rum ration. Fist to the Choral cavalry patch on your shoulder for good luck. Breathe, in, out.

Shipboard response team pinging three hallways down towards the engineering section. Showtime.

If the players have still not filled the **Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock**, or should they otherwise wish to clear out the last holdouts of resistance on the *Gallipoli* if they have, **Point 10** is still open – representing the supercarrier's engineering stack and reactor controls. As this point is not accessible until after the conclusion of **Scene 1-4**, the shipboard security teams and mechanized Marine complement of the ship have likely been drawn elsewhere in the ship; however, this is not a "free" victory for the players, as the *Gallipoli*'s engineering spaces are too small for any mechs above Size ½ to safely maneuver. Even those small enough to fit in the hallways are likely to find them claustrophobic, and with ample opportunities for an anti-chassis team to disable their frames with grenade launchers, quick-sealing whitewash, mines, and other close-range weapons. As such, **the players should dismount their mechs and transition into hardsuit combat for this section**. Hardsuit combat is covered in **Appendix B** (see p. 97).

For the purposes of this combat, treat the enemy forces and the players' objectives as three separate clocks with the following descriptors:

MARINE EFFECTIVENESS

10 Segments, **Disciplined**, **Anti-Chassis Weapons**, and **Dug In** as Strengths, **Rigid Tactics** as Weakness

Due to the **Disciplined** nature of the Second Committee Marines guarding the *Gallipoli*'s reactor, all attempts made to demoralize or negotiate with them are Heroic. As a result of their **Anti-Chassis Weapons**, their attacks deal **2 Stress** to a targeted player on a critically successful roll. As well, them being **Dug In** means that **Heavy Signature / A/C** weapons and handheld explosives (e.g., **Frag Grenades**) do not confer an additional +1 Accuracy to relevant direct combat checks against this clock. However, their **Rigid Tactics** mean that, the first time a player uses a Skill Trigger against this clock that has not been used by a member of the party before, they gain +1 Accuracy to their roll.

REACHING THE REACTOR

8 Segments, **Winding Halls** and **Automated Defenses** as Strengths, **Hold Your Fire!** as Weakness

Due to the **Winding Halls** of the *Gallipoli*'s engineering section, all rolls to traverse it are taken at +1 Difficulty. As well, its **Automated Defenses** will engage players if identified; rolls of a 1-9 on fighting this clock deal an additional **1 Stress**. However, the SecComm security teams have standing orders to **Hold Your Fire!** around sensitive engineering and reactor equipment; if a player's action on their previous turn was to fight this clock, then all rolls taken against them by the **Marine Effectiveness** and **Heavy Security Hardsuit** clocks suffer +1 Difficulty.

HEAVY SECURITY HARDSUIT

6 Segments, **Chassis-Scale Armor** and **Shrapnel Shotgun** as Strengths, **Ungainly** as Weakness

The heavy security hardsuit guarding the reactor controls wields a fearsome **Shrapnel Shotgun** that makes its attacks against players deal **2 Stress** on a successful roll (3 on a critical success) and grants +1 Accuracy to a roll to engage a player with its weapons.

As well, its **Chassis-Scale Armor** means that one segment of the clock is not filled on a 1-9 roll when fighting this clock; only the usual harm is suffered. However, its **Ungainly** nature in these tight corridors mean that rolls to harm it with melee-range attacks or outmaneuver it with speed or stealth gain +1 Accuracy.

Victory in this narrative combat occurs when either the **Marine Effectiveness** or **Reaching the Reactor** Clocks are filled; filling the **Heavy Security Hardsuit** Clock destroys it, preventing it further engaging with the players / trying to stop them from completing their other objectives. Defeat, as usual, is when all players fill their Stress bars, and represents the PCs being forced away from the *Gallipoli*'s engine stack. Victory, however, means that the PCs have either managed to successfully reach the reactor before the security teams can stop them or that the PCs have eliminated enough of the counter-boarding parties to render them combat ineffective, allowing them to stop the *Gallipoli*'s engines temporarily or briefly disable its central reactor stack as desired. Explain that planting charges on the reactors directly or otherwise seeking to detonate them would either do insufficient damage at this scale of ordnance, not function thanks to safety interlocks, or, should high-yield weapons be used, either instantly kill the PCs or provide SecComm reinforcements with sufficient time to potentially fix the problem.

For success in this narrative combat, **add 2 segments to the Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock**. For failure, add only **1 segment to the Blood of Aulis Clock**. In addition, if the PCs succeed in this narrative combat, the *Gallipoli* will automatically begin evacuation protocols: all Bulkhead Doors in other combats are locked open for the rest of the mission to ease personnel making it to their evacuation points, and players may treat rolls of 10-19 on the shipboard transitway's combat encounter table as 20+.

DOWNTIME 1

The mech-bay lies silent, for the time being. Some empty hardsuits and chassis, it seems, are actually empty – lined up against the walls or in their repair and assembly armatures like the silent guardians of some long-lost tomb. The ceiling stretches up far above and away, to where strike craft from the Gallipoli's flight decks sit in their clamps for repair and modification; parts lie splayed out over catwalks and upper floors like the offal of sacrifices spilt for some forgotten augury. For now, however, the printers are still active and humming, and – for the technically inclined – there's any number of weapons and spare parts lying around for the use of Second Committee pilots who aren't currently present. Best to put such things to a better cause.

CAPABILITIES ADVERTISEMENT – SCS-BB *DIANA*

The advertisement comes up at the start on the Union Navy seal during the Second Committee era – there, the proud phoenix in white cresting the bounds of the world below. As it fades out, it's replaced with a rotating three-dimensional model of the reprisal fleet's flagship in all its glory: strangely sleek for its sheer bulk, flaring out at one end to a nest of heavy engines and tapering at the other down to the recessed maw of a long-spool weapon. It's almost undecorated except for its name, identification, and insignia – other than the sweep of a pair of dark, stylized wings over the upper hull, shrouding the bulk of radiator arrays extending below. A set of captions slide into view and hold for a long moment.

Von Humboldt-*Class Fast Battleship (Modif.)*
SCS-BB Diana

A switch – the Diana *from a different perspective, partially zoomed in, showing off rows of hangar decks protected by armor and the bricklike, jutting protrusions of point-defense turrets.*

A Fleet In One Warship
**Semi-permanent Marine complement: 2,600+*
**Complete orbit-to-ground and ship-to-ship engagement capability*
Total Battlespace Oversight

Another perspective still: Laid out flat from above as if in a diagram or a blueprint, little arrows drawn from each descriptor towards the relevant parts of the vessel.

Breaking Ground for a New Age of Networked Operations
- Superheavy anti-capital rail batteries

CAPABILITIES ADVERTISEMENT – SCS-BB *DIANA*

- Dorsal and ventral munitions launch tubes
- Troop debarkation and transport areas
- Advanced electronic warfare and legionspace projection assets
- SAMIEL spinal particle lance

The background transitions from wireframe, flickering out in a roll of tiles like a digital display initializing – the void of space, the distant dot of a local sun, a destroyed frigate spiraling out of control and burning from within, a verdant world. The captions continue, highlighting relevant words in Union blue: countervalue, homeland.

Long-range Countervalue Strike Capability
In Defense Of Our Homeland

It holds there, and zooms out: the Diana*, silhouetted above the world below. The captions march on, inexorable, attaching to rings of slowly expanding orange patterned across the modeled atmosphere – inside, green and blue rot to dirty grey. Continents and oceans disappear into barren topology.*

- 12-hour engagement 95% lethality range
- 24-hour engagement 95% lethality range

One final transition – set over a mock-waving Second Committee tricolor, this time, angled up and towards the edge of the frame as if burning in the direction the flag was being carried. Escorts attend in its wake, trailing their own lines of nearlight-drive blue in streaks across the black of outer space.

SCS-BB Diana
Carrying the Future on Crow's Wings
The Spear of the One State

The ad ends with a triumphant little jingle before starting back over again. The abandoned dataslate, still plugged into the wall near a chassis maintenance rig as it is, will have enough power to keep playing the last thing its owner looked at forever.

The players will now have access to the massive flight and chassis repair facilities deep in the *Gallipoli*'s hull in order to reprint and modify their chassis, if only temporarily; **they gain +1 License Level and have a Full Repair, as well as healing 2 Stress if they did Scene 1-5**.

At this time, it's appropriate for PCs to be able to "call home" – to take some time to check in with characters

they may have met during the pre-module narrative on Lebaea, characters in their backstories, or command elements established in the faction hooks. As well, this is a good place for PCs to be able to interact with one another and build further rapport; despite the circumstances, this is a moment of what passes for peace. In general, players should be allotted one Downtime Action during this period (though it might be hard to Get A Damn Drink in a Second Committee warship if the players didn't bring one with them!)

If the PCs successfully disabled or distracted the SCS-LS *Sakharov*, either with the *Gallipoli*'s guns or through setting the supercarrier on a collision course with the frigate, those back in Coalition command will likely call them to thank them at this point – with the *Sakharov* out of commission, the skies are significantly clearer for the evacuation of Lebaea, especially if the PCs have successfully caused enough chaos on the *Gallipoli* to prevent its fighter screen being used to intercept the evacuation vessels. In general, the players should be updated on the current state of events dependent on their success on the **Disabling the *Gallipoli* Clock**, likely by the CDF liaison (Ahlberg) who first gave them their briefing:

If the Clock is not filled: The PCs have, unfortunately, failed their mission. Despite the best efforts of Coalition forces, the *Gallipoli* has been able to continue flight operations without significant impedance; though some evacuation craft make it through the fighter net, most of the hastily scrambled vessels – many of which are barely-armored civilian transports – are hunted down in the void by Second Committee strike fighters. The edict of the mysterious Lady Iphigenia is clear: none are to escape her judgement, and that judgement has long since been pre-ordained as death. The players are given a final send-off from Coalition command as they pull out of Lebaea, and told to not expect further communication or support, but to sell their lives dearly.

If the Clock is filled: Between the strike craft and chassis destroyed directly by the PCs and the chaos caused through the hallways and in the secure areas of the *Gallipoli*, its operational tempo has been sufficiently disrupted and its attention pulled off-station enough to prevent it being able to meaningfully interfere with the evacuation of Lebaea. Between commandeered civilian vessels, the few remaining sublines in CDF service who could hold evacuees, and the selfless efforts of individual people in a time of great need to improvise solutions out of orbital infrastructure and emergency equipment, the first stages of the evacuation are well underway. Though some ships are, inevitably and sadly, intercepted by Second Committee fighters, such a loss of life is significantly less than it would've been without the PCs' intervention.

If the Clock is overfilled: Not only have the PCs succeeded in disabling (if temporarily) many of the *Gallipoli*'s primary systems, they've gone above and beyond through methods such as commandeering the ship's guns or striking a blow against the first member of the Crowsworn. Given this, the evacuation is able to proceed almost without loss of life in its initial stages, something the PCs are gratefully thanked for. As a result of this, some of the CDF sublines are already starting to come back from their first runs away from the planet, and are able to relay **Scouting** data on the forces that are now being positioned to screen the SCS-BB *Diana* as it grinds towards the planet. The players are given intelligence on the number and type of the enemies they will be facing in **Scene 2-1** as part of the *Diana*'s defensive patrols.

Once the PCs have finished with their Downtime actions, they should receive a short briefing about their next steps, should they be continuing with the next mission: assaulting the SCS-BB *Diana* itself. Unfortunately, given their chassis mounts are long gone and the nearest place to even launch with one is on the far end of the ship in its hangar bays, the PCs will have to take a different path to get to the Second Committee flagship: firing themselves, and their chassis, out of an escape pod launch tube and coasting silent along the *Diana*'s approach path towards Lebaea to intercept it, and force a landing atop the ship's hull. The fact that they have this opportunity at all is unexpected, but it's not one to be squandered: if there's still a fight left to be had, it's vital to keep taking it to the enemy before the momentum shifts back in the reprisal fleet's favor.

At this time, the players can also progress their side missions as a Downtime Action, with information given as follows. If they do so, on a 1-9 they gain no useful information, on a 10-19 they gain Progress 1, and on a 20+ they also gain Progress 2.

ARMORY LEGIONNAIRES SIDE MISSION

weapons manifests, gunnery controls, etc.

PROGRESS 1

While there are no BLACKTHORN TREE weapons present on the Gallipoli – the carrier doesn't have the necessary equipment to properly deploy them – you're able to access a fleet-wide weapons manifest that states where the weapons are stored on the Diana: in its primary ordnance room. More relevantly, you're also able to access a standard transport procedure for TBK devices.

PROGRESS 2

As well, a lucky break catches you a fragment of data: an access key for weapons disposal technicians.

UNION NAVY SIDE MISSION

the navigation computers of the Gallipoli, flight recorders, etc.

PROGRESS 1

The SCS-CV Gallipoli, *the* Diana's *escort, was dispatched from the Cradle system shipyards around Jupiter to assist in the defense of a near-Core world loyal to SecComm important for shipbuilding and weapons production, from what appeared to be some kind of nascent ThirdComm battlegroup.*

PROGRESS 2

This battlegroup was tagged with Union Health Bureau identifiers.

CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES SIDE MISSION

near-space flight records, recovered communications logs, etc.

PROGRESS 1

The Gallipoli *has passive records of the Armory breach team's flight to the* Diana *– entering a small shipboard hangar bay and proceeding to land in their dropship as normal. The dropship's track number does not re-emerge as part of the flight patterns later in the record.*

PROGRESS 2

The flight records are sufficiently high-fidelity to identify the exact shuttle-bay used: Bay 2B, on the Diana's port-side infantry accommodations deck.

FREELANCERS SIDE MISSION

investigating local computing infrastructure, digging around near Asteria's casket, etc.

PROGRESS 1

You manage to locate a copy of the most recent cycling report for Asteria. According to this, she's an Iphigenia-class NHP listed as the Chief Flight Officer for the Gallipoli, *in service for between 350 to 400 years.* Some players may note that this timeline is surprisingly short, and inconsistent with the date they may see on Progress 2; this is a hint towards Iphigenia's own fragmentation into her "daughters" and the illusion being upkept around it. *Psychologically, she was noted as "fitting the ideals of the Iphigenia subjectivity line," which is to say exhibiting a goal-oriented, ends-forward mentality and "immense capability for multi-component, large-input-space data processing and evaluation".*

PROGRESS 2

Additionally, the cycling report comes with a form attached – a Political Advancement and Ideological Security assessment. According to the assessment, though much of it is dense and rather dated psychological jargon, Asteria has maintained unwavering loyalty to Union over the course of her deployment; a note is made that something called an "ERF" (though this terminology is never explained) "continued to function as designed". For GM reference, an ERF is an External Reinforcement Factor – the shackling components that confine Iphigenia's own thoughts. The assessment is stated to be performed every two years, but the last time it was performed was just over 400 years ago.

MISSION 2: THE GODDESS OF THE HUNT – LL7

"My will controls the shining heights of heaven, the health-giving sea-winds, and the mournful silences of hell."

– Metamorphoses, Apuleius

MISSION SCENES

SCENE 2-1: TEMPLE GATES

SCENE 2-2: LAUNCH PROTOCOL

SCENE 2-3: SALT THE EARTH

SCENE 2-4: TO THE ADYTON

BRIEFING

Having survived the approach to Iphigenia's flagship, the SCS-BB *Diana*, the players must now actually land on the battleship's hull before finding a route in – their primary aim to disable or destroy the TBK weapons onboard, and if they survive that, to delve deeper yet…

GOAL:	Find a means of ingress, reach the ship's armory, and then – if one survives – attempt to reach Iphigenia Herself at the vessel's heart.
STAKES:	Failure means that Iphigenia will have free reign to deploy the full might of a TBK-munition arsenal on Lebaea's populated surface.
REWARD:	In the brief interlude before pressing deeper into the *Diana*, the PCs will be able to upgrade to **License Level 8**-standard gear, as well as potentially obtaining **Exotic Gear** depending on their side missions.
RESERVES:	The PCs may use their **Bombardment** herein, as well as gaining access to other Reserves through side missions for use in the Mission 3 gauntlet.

BEACHHEAD

>//[CNDR(CND-1-10)::*RELEASING TASKING TO UNIT COMMANDERS++ATTEND TO YOUR APPROACH VECTORS ZONE HOT++DO NOT REPEAT DO NOT DEVIATE FROM INSERTION PATHWAYS++SUBLINE SUPPORT IS GUNS HOT ETI 25 SECONDS++GOOD LUCK AND GODSSPEED*

>//[DRKS.1(OKH-5-1)::*YOU HEARD CINDER++WE'RE GOING TO HIT THE CHAUVS BEFORE THEY CAN STICK THEIR HEADS BACK UP++FIRST PILOT TO TOUCH THE DIANA AFTER THE SMOKE SETTLES IS BUYING DRINKS++FLIGHT ELEMENTS CHECK IN AND HARK HUD TUNNEL*

>//[DRKS.2(OKH-5-1)::*ROG 1++2 REPORTING IN, 3 CDF ON MY WING++RAILS GREEN, OVERBOOST NOMINAL*

>//[DRKS.3(OKH-5-1)::*3 HERE++PURV ATTACH HAVEN'T GOTTEN THEMSELVES KILLED YET++SET FOR HARD LANDIGODDAMN THOSE ROUNDS WENT BY QUICK*

>//[SNBM.4(CND-120-5)::*CLEAN SEPARATION AND POSITIVE IMPACT++CIRCLING AROUND, NEXT RUN IN 5:40*

>//[DRKS.1(OKH-5-1)::*DIVE, DIVE, DIVE++GET THOSE SHERMANS ON THE DECK, CHAP'++IT'LL BE THE BEST SHOW SINCE 4582*

SCENE 2-1:
TEMPLE GATES

SITREP:	Gauntlet (*Lancer* p.271)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Marine Veteran Strider** (Strider options: Sapper Kit, CQB Training; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Engineering, Legendary, Acrobat; Marine options: Deck Anchors, Captive Spike; swap Marksman Kit for +1 Difficulty on saves and checks against this character's effects) ***MSgt. Villeneuve, 65th Union Marines*** 1x **Marine Bastion** (Bastion options: Fearless Defender, Deathcounter; Marine options: Pointman Plating)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 2x **Spacer Grunt Assault**
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Marine Engineer** (Engineer options: Skyshield Protocol; Marine options: Portable Barricade)
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Veteran Ace** (Ace options: Strafe; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy to Hull, Insulated, Self-Repair) 1x **Marine Scourer** (Scourer options: Flash Lens; Marine options: Battering Ram)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Ship Archer** (Archer options: Impending Threat; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Shock Armor, Deadly) ***Gallipoli E-3***
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Marine Cataphract** (Cataphract options: Electrified Lasso; Marine options: Deck Anchors)

From your staging point deep in the void of space – the fifth to launch an attack, in a series of staggered waves meant to overwhelm and distract the Diana's defenses – the battleship is still a vast wall of dark grey and glittering running lights hanging in the void. It pushes inexorably towards Lebaea, even as it sweeps aside the remaining orbital defenses with lashes of tracer-fire and single, stabbing lances from its immense primary batteries – despite all valiant efforts, the defense platforms which now fall burning into the planet's atmosphere can't stall the ship for long.

The signal comes. Launch, launch, launch.

As you get closer, you can see the debris littering the void: dropships, chassis, from both sides, cored out and strewn across the Diana's flight path like discarded paper dolls. Point-defense turrets burn with gouts of electrically-fueled fire, trailing greasy black smoke into the airless void from burning plastics and reaction oxidizer: silent, and blessedly so given the caliber of weaponry that would otherwise be facing you. Too quick to follow, a strike craft in Second Committee livery flashes by, pursued by a sleek interceptor with Choral Defense Forces markings.

Further down, the Marines wait.

They've attached themselves to the Diana's hull like limpet mines: an entire division at least, with subaltern infantry support dug into the lee of heat vents and communications dishes. Weapons fire flashes out from the mag-locked chassis into the Coalition forces pressing up along the hull – killing, maiming, but not halting. Somewhere, one glittering dot wrestles down another, tearing them off the deck; both go spinning off into the void, one hacking at the other with a boarding axe and the other reaching for a knife locked to their thigh-plating. A different dot kneels behind a pre-fabricated barricade to make a shot that turns a speck of metal into a smear of lazily drifting fragments, as their target's cockpit is torn clean out from between its shoulders. It's only closer that the dancing spots resolve into proper chassis – into the glow of gleaming photoreceptors, and the glint of light off of honor markings worn and brutalized by the press of battle.

There's only one place to think about boarding the Diana, and that's through them.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-2-1map.png

Zones given in red represent the Enemy Deployment Zones/ingress zones, the large one of whom is the objective, and zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding; terrain that only supplies soft cover will have a lowercase S after the number.

This scene takes place in a **Zero-Gravity Environment**. It will also represent the first time the players fight enemies with the Marine template, as opposed to the Naval Air Arm auxiliary chassis and strike craft from earlier on approach to the *Gallipoli*: these dangerous opponents are exactingly trained to fight and hold ground on their ships, and pair the ability to operate normally in zero-G with an additional Difficulty granted on Reaction attacks the players make against them.

Going out and striking at the PCs before they reach the Gauntlet zone is unwise: they have to advance towards you, and many of your weapons are close-range, such as this encounter's miniboss. If possible, hunker down behind cover and take the time to fortify the area with tools such as the Engineer's autoturrets and portable barricades while moving the Strider into a favorable ambush position.

When the proper time strikes, the Strider's ability to use its Captive Spike to force a save on a PC lest they be used as a human shield can be devastating for disrupting a team composition, especially if combined with lockdown tools from the Archer or harassment from the Cataphract and Ace – and recalling that the Strider cannot be Slowed, creating a nasty interaction with Captive Spike. The opposing force for this sitrep is naturally cagey, relying on the players to step into a pre-arranged killbox or trap for best effect. Beware of players with artillery that ignores line of sight, and try to single them out for elimination ahead of time to prevent them being able to harass or destroy targets inside the fortified end-zone. Keep in mind that the Bastion can intercede and take hits on behalf of the miniboss (or other important allies), and that the first hit players inflict on it when targeting it directly is nullified each round.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

As the dust settles, the PCs have disrupted the enemy forces in the area enough to clear a temporary safe zone – enough room punched through the Marine division's assembly of force that they can continue moving forward along the *Diana*'s hull. As the slope of the hull changes in the journey down the warship, the PCs will eventually end up moving upside-down towards the anti-capital ventral torpedo tubes they'll be boarding through.

Below you is spread the expanse of Lebaea – no longer just a faint blue-green dot, or the verdant forests and urban environments you'd have seen from the ground, the horizon takes up almost the whole of your vision. Embers flit down through the atmosphere as debris burns up – larger pieces impact in forests and oceans, sending up plumes of dirt and steam. There, out of the very edge of vision, can be seen the emergency lights of Praetorian's Rest on the spires lancing up towards space, and the distant shadows of evacuation ships.

Exactly below you, a few dark arrows drift through the ocean towards a recently impacted chunk of orbital infrastructure: boats, no doubt, but for salvage or search-and-rescue?

Ahead along the hull, blackness looms, circled about with crimson lights.

These are the torpedo tubes – immensely oversized weapons launch apertures. With a Spot or similar, players will be able to identify them as such, and as their intended entry point with respect to a maintenance catwalk that runs along the interior; with a Read a Situation or similar, players will be able to feel the rumbling of the entire ship under their feet (and start to build an understanding of the time it takes between launches) before the next launch occurs.

Before you, a single anti-capital torpedo exits its launch tube – eclipsing the space in front of you and obscuring the view of the planet below in a heartbeat, but completely soundless in the dead of space. It's so vast that the letters spray-painted on its side, an archaic in-joke about the Second Committee legal code faded with time and wear, are themselves the size of a mech.

Reaction thrusters flick on and off in hisses of flame, steering the weapon ponderously towards the distant form of an orbital defense station still firing at the Diana's scarred flank. Only when it's aligned does the main thruster ignite in a gout of blue fire, sending it along its flight path like an arrow loosed from a bow – and giving off enough heat to spike warnings in your chassis. For those not sufficiently insulated, it'd be enough to raise a sweat in an instant before the torpedo springs off, already a distantly receding line.

Inside lies the catwalk, just barely wide enough for chassis to pass – no doubt so industrial-grade mechs and hardsuits could access the area for repairs. All you see is built for a singular purpose, one so deeply worked into it that it practically seems to bleed from the arching, dark walls and the dull working lights. There isn't even a handrail: instead, workers are intended to either lock themselves to the decking or hook themselves to rings running along the hull interior.

There's a long walk ahead.

During this walk, or during the rest that follows whilst the PCs effect emergency repairs to their chassis, each

should make a **Systems** save against **Save Target 17**; on a failure, the image of a woman appears, only visible to them.

The woman herself is a slight figure in her early twenties, perhaps on the lower end of five feet in height, attired is the dress blacks of a Union Navy officer during the Second Committee era. A high collar comes up halfway on her neck, circled about with gold and then brought down with a single line of buttons to where the coat stops just south of her waist. Shoulder boards, also lined in a thin layer of gold thread, bear the marks of rank of an admiral (though, if spoken to about it, she'll insist that it's merely a brevet rank – and that, if pressed, the proper form of address for her is *My Lady*, or *"Comrade, for those of sufficient political advancement"*), and at her cuffs are three lines of dark blue fabric. A shawl of hand-knitted black is wrapped tight around her throat and draped over her back, in a strangely human affectation for a Navy admiral of the period – it's as if she's bundled up to ward off a cold she can't feel.

Over her heart on the breast of the uniform is a double line of medal ribbons, nine in total. One stands out against the others, fashioned of a pure and dark red. Under the medal rack is a circular ivory party allegiance pin, depicting a stylized hand holding a single sheaf of wheat and a single arrow in its grasp; it's rimmed in gold, signifying a highly placed Party member or one granted great honor by the Party.

Her olive-skinned, Mediterranean face is thin but youthful, as if weighted beyond its years. Her full lips are unpainted; the only cosmetic she wears is charcoal smeared beneath her eyes, which are a brilliant shade of indigo. Despite the prideful hints to the way she carries herself, her eyes show faint signs–such as red-rimming–of having recently wept, while her hair is black – typically tied back in a high, businesslike bun and held there with a set of two needle-sharp, golden pins.

This is Lady Iphigenia, War herself.

THE RED RIBBON

The medal this ribbon signifies is, much like a senior Party pin, typically not one pinned on NHPs during the Second Committee era – a fact that would immediately stand out for one versed in their Deimosian rights as they interacted with anthrochauvinist policy, or simply the Union military of the period.

In briefest terms, its significance is for "an act of selfless and immense sacrifice in the line of duty or service to Union". Most often, the medal was given posthumously – to the next-of-kin who died performing heroic acts, including (in one notable civilian example) the emergency response crew who initially boarded Deimos during RA's appearance and vanished entirely after the Event's conclusion.

THE RED RIBBON

However, the medal could also be given to those who made a sacrifice comparable to being struck dead; one of the darker episodes in the Second Committee's history was when the medals began being given to those who gave the TBK order for their own homeworld.

If asked, Iphigenia herself will say thinly (and with an unusual sharpness) that the asker wouldn't understand the nature of the sacrifice she made to win it.

The PCs should likely be able to see an immediate resemblance to Asteria, if they've met her; indeed, though unbeknownst to them it's the result of a blind partitioning procedure instead of the NHP-cloning relationship one would expect, the two look as if they could have been mother and daughter – or, given the apparent ages, perhaps sisters. Iphigenia's voice, however, carries the weight of years.

Through a roll such as a **Hack or Fix** or **Read a Situation**, PCs may be able to discover exactly how Iphigenia appears – for a split second, the power of a true fleet legion has been used to punch through their mechs' systemic defenses, hijacking their communications network for her voice and their heads-up displays and subjectivity suites for her "physical" form. Put simply, other than to those affected, there's nothing there at all – and for all involved, all that's there is a sensor ghost.

The woman herself will briefly engage them in conversation if spoken to, though otherwise, she's content to wander around their temporary encampment during a moment's repair, walk alongside their chassis, or (in some cases) even ride upon a weapon arm without remark. If spoken to, the same personality recommendations from Asteria hold: unfailingly polite in a manner between distracted and faintly disdainful, and with an air of prideful knowledgeability that fits with her officer's bearing. Good topics to touch upon in this meeting include the PCs' intended objectives, AJAX's fate on the *Gallipoli*, their general performance thus far, and the specific provenances and origins of the party – she'll steer away from discussing the TBK itself with increasing irritation the more times it's brought up, and treat the subject of "discussing the violence inherent in the system yet again" as an origin of boredom more than anything else. There can either be multiple versions of Iphigenia carrying on their own parallel conversations with individual PCs, multiple versions which speak in unison, or a single one engaged with all characters at the same time, depending on the GM's desires.

When the conversation draws to a natural close, another torpedo rumbles down the launch tube – in its

wake, the digital illusion disappears with a brief flicker of light, and all that remains is the walk ahead.

PC DEFEAT

As a result of the PCs failing to punch through the Marines lines on the *Diana*'s hull, they need to wait for additional reinforcements from Coalition forces to open up a wide enough front that they're able to win a temporary corridor through strength of numbers. This delay means that the Second Committee is able to move more forces into place inside the ship itself; at the GM's discretion, **an additional 4 Mercenary Berserker Grunts may be added to Scene 2-2, split between initial forces and reinforcements.** Regardless of whether they choose to represent this mechanically with their own players, it should be represented narratively: the Coalition forces attempting to seize control of critical ship entryways and subsystems are having a significantly harder time of it, with appropriate radio chatter to convey such. Additionally, while the PCs still do enter the *Diana* through its torpedo tubes – and the read-aloud given in the above **PC Victory** section still applies – they do not meet Iphigenia directly. Due to their lack of standout performance, they do not rate an audience with the shipmistress at this time, though they may still see evidence of her presence or the ghost of her projection elsewhere through their travels as she supervises her forces. **Add 2 segments to the Blood of Aulis Clock.**

SCENE 2-2:
LAUNCH PROTOCOL

SITREP:	None/Deathmatch
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Elite Lurker** (Lurker options: Ripper Claws, Defensive Shroud) 1x **Lurker** (Lurker options: Empower Shroud) 1x **Commander Hive** (Hive options: Driving Swarm; Commander options: Quick March)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Witch** (Witch options: Chain; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Hacker, Feign Death)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Mercenary Assassin** (Assassin options: Spinning Kick; Mercenary options: Bounty Hunter; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Engineering, Slippery, Lightning Reflexes) Add 2x **Mercenary Berserker Grunts**
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Hive** (Hive options: Driving Swarm)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Sniper** (Sniper options: Defensive Grapple)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 2x **Mercenary Berserker Grunts**

From your staging point deep in the void of space – In the depths of the torpedo tubes, just before you're set to reach the maintenance corridor exits, there lies a narrow set of platforms where the space widens out – a ladder-strewn, catwalk-spanned space where steel and stains are leavened an ounce by the dull color of safety yellow. Here is where the loading mechanisms emerge from the bow armory to push each anti-capital munition into its firing lane – and thus also where those loading mechanisms have to be maintained, and any last-minute corrections to the munitions themselves be made. Plumes of steam from hidden pipework hiss up from underneath the grating, raising the occasional temperature warning from your chassis; high up along the walls, the pattern of pathways shift to account for "gravity" being born from the Diana's engines, and scale and angle combine to make a dizzying alternate perspective in this moment of respite.

It is not respite that lasts long, however. At first, it is indeed only steam that billows out of the gratings – but temperature warnings change to greywash warnings rapidly, echoing shrill tones of concern as sensors ping the shadows of chassis through the unnatural smoke.

Some of them seem to be melting through the blooming nanite clouds to reach you – one moment they ping in one location, the next in another as visibility goes from bad to worse. Proximity warnings wail as another torpedo drops with crushing force in its firing lane next to you, and pistons the size of tanks maneuver it into place – that almost obscures the next group of sensor ghosts.

This is an ambush – and they'll be on you in seconds.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-2-2map.png
Zones given in red represent the Enemy Deployment Zones/ingress zones and zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding; terrain that only supplies soft cover will have a lowercase S after the number. **Active Torpedo Lanes** are represented in black.

The primary feature of this map is the **Active Torpedo Lanes**. At the end of the third turn in each round, the *Diana* will fire an anti-ship torpedo through one of its tubes, starting on the left, then on the right, and then repeating: the scale and speed of these superheavy munitions is such that anything the size of a mech standing in the way of them is liable to be completely obliterated. **If a character is standing in an Active Torpedo Lane when a torpedo is fired, they must make an Agility check; on a success, they take 2d6+2 irreducible Kinetic damage, and on a failure, immediately suffer 1 Structure damage. In either case, they are pushed directly to the nearest space outside of the Active Torpedo Lane.**

The enemy forces for this mission interact with the mechanic directly through zoners (which take up space in the "safe" parts of the map and close off avenues for PC movement) and harassers (which lock down PCs inside unsafe areas of the map or move them into the way of the torpedo lanes). The zoners are the two Lurkers (which also act as an introduction to the archetype for the later boss fight with DIOMEDES in **Scene 3-2**), the Sniper (by forcing players to keep to cover), and the Berserker Grunts, while the harassers are the Witch (with tools like Chain) and Assassin (with its Spinning Kick). The Hives fill in both roles, between zoning tools like their nanite cloud and their tools like Driving Swarm that allow them to move the PCs around the map. Additionally notable is that the Lurkers can use each other's Shroud Zones for bonuses – a Lurker isn't restricted to gaining benefits from just *its own*.

The Assassin is best used in concert with the Berserker Grunts – Mercenaries innately gain bonuses against targets in engagement range of an allied character, such as the Assassin being buffed up by its entourage of Berserkers (and vice-versa, especially as a swarm of Berserkers mobbing one PC). Bounty Hunter also buffs up all Mercenaries on the field against the chosen target; it's recommended this target be the best-performing character in previous combats, someone who previously insulted Iphigenia, or a similar stand-out rationale. If necessary, a simple "the Lady conveys her regards" over comms to the target should make clear why they've been selected, and provide a narrative way to build upon that thread of antagonism in Iphigenia seeking to focus down a specific thorn (or just someone who annoyed her personally – she's not, truly, above a tiny bit of pettiness in her target selection).

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

As the PCs fight their way through the ambush, they're left on a silent maintenance platform once again – without the Hives and Lurkers to generate the shrouds of nanite-cloud smoke, all that remains are hollow chassis, steam, and the ever-present drumbeat percussion of the *Diana* launching weapons against Lebaea's orbital defenses. Some radio chatter even reports that a handful of the launches which passed the PCs have begun to be directed against ground targets, based on their projected trajectories – however, nothing appears to have broken through the Coalition defenses on the ground and in orbit yet, especially if the PCs' actions in Mission 1 resulted in the *Sakharov* having been taken out of consideration. Ahead of them lies the access doors for maintenance techs and chassis to emerge back into the bow armory – and their next foe…

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs are defeated here, such represents them losing their chassis (and potentially their pilots) to the Second Committee Quick Response Force's ambush. As such, it's narratively best for surviving pilots to be able to evade and escape back to where other Coalition forces have broken through into the *Diana*, filling back out their party and being able to gather new chassis (albeit likely damaged) before taking on ACHILLES in the bow armory. Now would also be a good time for usage of Power at a Cost to be able to recover fresh chassis, aid a pilot in escaping what might have otherwise been certain death, or so on. Regardless of those circumstances, **add 1 segment to the Blood of Aulis Clock** to represent the time and materiel lost in needing to do so, as well as any lives lost.

Additionally, if the players believe they would be unable to defeat their enemies at any point during the mission, they can also try to escape with their chassis before being brought down – they count as having been defeated, but can preserve some resources before the continuation of the mission (it's far easier to repair a mech than to try and bring one back from a wreck, both narratively and mechanically).

SCENE 2-3:
SALT THE EARTH

SITREP:	Kill **ACHILLES**.
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Size 2 Ultra Ronin** (Ronin options: Instinct Mode; Ultra options: Argus Armor, Superior Frame; Veteran options: NHP Co-Pilot, Hardened Target; *Special: Achillean Resistance, Last Ride of the Greek*) ***ACHILLES, Crowsworn Somatophylax*** 1x **Barricade** (Barricade options: Drag Down)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 1x **Veteran Morozko** (Morozko options: Mediator Rod Shunt; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Hardened Target, Self-Repair) ***TBK Maintenance Engineer***
FOR 5 PCS:	N/A
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	2x **Grunt Bastions** (Bastion options: Fearless Defender, Deathcounter)
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 2x **Grunt Scourers**
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Spec Op Hornet** (Hornet options: Supersonic; Spec Op options: Null-Perception Coating) Add 1x **Spec Op Scout** (Scout options: Expose Weakness; Spec Op options: Special Munitions)

The Diana was not meant to live in. A skeleton crew would man its highly automated guns and garrison its narrow, machinery-lined halls; though it held thousands of troops, a "fleet of one" in the spirit of the Second Committee's dying days, those slept the sleep of the dead in their stasis-locked capsules beneath the primary deck levels. When it was time, they would be awoken, given their Genghis and Haber and Enkidu frames (and other, lesser-known beasts of steel dwelling in their secret places), and they would walk into their sterilely cold deployment deck two hundred at a time to be launched out – metal shells, fired from the barrel of a gun to the planet far below. It is austere in every respect, form-forward in a way that conjures reminiscence of industrial mining vessels and the furniture of a rifle.

The Diana was meant to be a place for others to die in. Its winding, tight corridors and ever-watchful security cameras speak to that. Hostility to the uninitiated drips like rust from the poorly maintained bolts on the crew-access corridors you emerge from.

Its bow armory is a distillation of that ideal: sectioned-off blast units contain vast piles of munitions ready to be moved by automated systems into the fore torpedo tubes or shuttled elsewhere along the ship too unsecured to safely keep TBK munitions for long. There is no hiding what they are. Each of them bears the euphemistic warning symbol of a TBK weapon stamped somewhere on their unpainted metal shells: a lightning bolt piercing through a hollow circle, a world impaled. Other warning symbols follow – the radiation trefoil. Chemical hazards. Blackwash marks.

They, however, are sealed in their storage caskets, flanked by banks of humming computer consoles and the immense crane-arms of loading mechanisms.

The machine in front of you is held behind no such bars.

It uncurls its arms from around its chest as you approach – even under as high a ceiling as this, where ammunition belts the size of entire chassis disappear to hidden places above, it has to lean down to avoid scraping it with the horned crest of its helmet. A bolt of crimson cloth is draped about its blocky shoulders, careful to avoid bricks of reactive armor, in what might've been a full mantle on a smaller frame. It's matched by the handprint stamp on the chassis's breast – deep, dark red, as if something had dried there in the ridges of anti-mine coating.

The only other accoutrements it has allowed itself (or been allowed, perhaps) are unit markings: a slash of Union-blue identifying stripe through the camouflage,

a shoulder patch of a stylized tank impaled on a devil's trident, a Roman III etched on its knee-plate.

That – and the spear.

It's as tall as the chassis is, a long lance of gleaming tungsten alloy wound through with traces of deep blue. It handles the weapon with a familiarity that borders on carelessness.

"Been waiting," it says, its accent deep and glottal. "Skip the monologue. Already heard too many today."

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-2-3map.png
Zones given in red represent the Enemy Deployment Zones/ingress zones, and zones given in blue represent the Player Deployment Zone. Terrain height is given by numbers/color coding; terrain that only supplies soft cover will have a lowercase S after the number. **TBK Weapons Caches** are represented as the three-hex white and red towers. Blue lines represent **Bulkhead Doors** (see p. 29) in the environment. The soft cover is, narratively, clusters of computer consoles or other human-scale machinery, while the tall Height 5 towers represent loading cranes and ceiling support pillars.

Details:
The central mechanic of this fight is around ***ACHILLES*** *(he/him)*, the players' objective – and his unique defensive trait, **Achillean Resistance**.

ACHILLEAN RESISTANCE Trait

ACHILLES has **RESISTANCE** to all damage, **Heat**, and **Burn** and regenerates **¼ of his total HP** at the end of his turn. Disable this part of the trait until the end of the round when ACHILLES takes **Burn** from an environmental source, or while ACHILLES is **STUNNED** for any other reason than as a result of Structure checks. ACHILLES is also Immune to **JAMMED** and restores **1d6 HP** when he inflicts a Critical Hit with a melee attack.

It keeps coming, knitting itself back together with whitewash and self-restoration protocols, surviving shots that would've blown a human pilot to pieces or ruined a normal chassis beyond repair. It always has; without intervention, it always will. It is driven by a will – by the idea that it is stronger than anything in this world, because the power of the will is greater than any concern in alarm-sirens or integrity warnings. It will take its handlers' own weapons to destroy it.

LAST RIDE OF THE GREEK Trait

When ACHILLES is at less than half HP on his final Structure at the start of his turn, he may choose to clear all conditions and statuses, stand from **PRONE**, and move his Speed towards a single hostile character, at which point he **BARRAGES** with the Carbon Fiber Sword as a **FULL ACTION** (with all four attacks targeting that character). After these attacks are resolved, ACHILLES is destroyed.

The sea nymphs had covered you with fat and honey,
and you blazed like the sun in the fire,
turning to ash as captains rode past in their war carts and wearing full armor.
Every foot soldier followed in rank, single file, saluting your honor.
And hot as a fire consuming a forest, the flames burned your flesh away.
- *The Odyssey, Homer, Book 24*

In order to provide environmental sources, multiple **TBK Weapons Caches** have been set around the map, representing the various Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Nanite (CBRNN) weapons being prepared for immediate deployment from the armory. **A TBK Weapons Cache is a Size 2 Object with 10 HP, 2 Armor, 5 Evasion, and 10 E-Defense. When destroyed, its spaces become an area of Difficult Terrain that automatically deals 3 Burn to characters who enter or begin their turn in it for the first time in a round. This Burn cannot be ignored or reduced by any means.**

ACHILLES is best served getting directly into melee with the PCs as soon as possible, locking them down with potent melee damage and the threat of Instinct Mode – in that sense, his gameplan is straightforwardly attacking head-on, with his unique traits serving that aim in making him more difficult to just burst down in reply with front-loaded or long-ranged damage and requiring PCs to engage with disabling **Achillean Resistance** through kiting, ramming, Ferrous Lashing, or otherwise moving ACHILLES through the burn sources available on the map – while Superior Frame protects him from being Immobilize-locked inside a burn zone, many options remain to the PCs to involuntarily place him in one in order to disable the trait.

The Barricade is best used to lock down passage through the armory, funneling PCs back into ACHILLES's threat range, while the Morozko is best used to divert attention from ACHILLES alone if PCs want to perform optimally using many of LANCER's powerful Heat-based mech builds – which it interferes with the operation of, using its central mechanics. Similarly, the Hornet and Scout in higher levels' reinforcements fill similar roles of applying control and enabling ACHILLES to do the majority of the damage work: especially notable is the combo of the Scout

using its Spec Op auto-crit to trigger Expose Weakness, apply Scout lock-on, and knock an enemy Prone in the same activation, opening them up for devastating damage.

Finally, ACHILLES's last unique ability should be – if used at all, which it needn't be in every fight – targeted at the character who damaged him most or otherwise contributed most to his death, and represent one last all-out struggle before the strain of doing so combined with the previous damage inflicted to him finally destroys his chassis.

In terms of ACHILLES' personality as a character, he is terse, often uncommunicative, and derisive when he does deign to communicate, with significant disdain for the idea of the PCs attempting to "talk him down" or otherwise waste time that he could be spending engaging in combat – something that spurs him and makes him feel most alive, compared to the idle boredom of discussing one's ideological reasons for the killing *"we were all going to get to anyway".*

THE CRIMSON PALM

Out of the many and largely non-standardized personal decorations that appeared during the Revolution, the Crimson Palm was one of those most strongly associated with Second Committee dedicated counterrevolutionary units. Apocryphally the result of a Marine engaged in close combat with an insurgent cell on Cradle receiving a bloody handprint on their chassis and painting over it in red afterwards, it would later be canonized as a mark of honor for units which served with distinction in urban/CQB counterinsurgency environments. Typically, the Crimson Palm would be administered by one's unit commander by submerging their hand in red paint and then applying it palm-first to the honoree's chassis or hardsuit.

Whereas AJAX previously represented complicity-by-ideology in terms of attitude to the TBK, the theme which ACHILLES represents is complicity-by-psychopathy: just as a human might bear such an illness, so has he, long since deprived of healing mechanisms and channeled by his long-dead Second Committee handlers into a spirit less that of a warrior and more that of an outright murderer. He does not care for the ideology promulgated by the others beyond parroting it (with a faint tone of sarcasm), nor particularly loyalty to the wider regime of Union-as-it-was, but rather fights (and is committed to the task of the TBK) solely for the glory he finds in butchery. Iphigenia, and loyalty to her, is the link through which he finds such urges rewarded and justified. It should be stressed, however, that he is not cartoonishly evil or violent: he is simply motivated by violence for its own sake, and the joy he finds in the press of combat.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

After ACHILLES falls, the armory is silent – yet, for the first time since the PCs have seen her since their journey through the *Diana*'s weapons (or perhaps at all), Iphigenia pays a visit.

Or, more accurately, she was always there to begin with – as she's always throughout her ship, observing without presence and watching without eyes.

Out of security cameras and the flicker of fires, something resolves: like a blurry smear through a camera coming into focus, a sketch of details that fills in with the sweep of an arm clothed in uniform. She is sitting upon someone's long-abandoned station, between a climate diagnostic probe and a flexible monitor – and she is not looking at you. Just at where ACHILLES lies, frozen in his last effort.

The girl runs a long-handled comb through her hair– for once, let down from its high bun. The needle-sharp pins that would hold her coiffure together lie upon the weapons console, gleaming in the dull light of projected fire trajectories.

"Ah. You've killed him, then. One step closer to your eventual goal. I cannot begrudge it of you."

Each languid draw of the comb through her black locks does not make the soft noise of tines through hair, but the rasp of a medic's saw cutting through bone.

"I am a bullet," she says placidly. The wings folded behind her flutter in a ruffle of oil-dark feathers. "The highest point of culmination of the anthrochauvinist ideal. A bullet has neither past nor future other than that traced in its passing. I, too, have no other future. I was not born; I was made. In that making, I possess a singular purpose: death. I am the end of futures. The end of lives. The end of history."

She shifts her upraised arm. The shoulder boards of a Union Navy admiral, for a moment, show through the too-straight fall of her hair–and then, she transfers the comb to her other hand, and begins running through the other side. The rasp continues, as steady as each long, slow drag of the comb.

"You breathe. You bleed. I would, I think, have liked to know what that feels like, instead of see it in the corpses of your fellows and mine. I have seen it writ across billions of lives, but I have never felt it myself. I have never known what it is like to open a vein, only to see it opened. I have never known what it is like to die, only to see death."

She laughs. The medals pinned to the breast of her uniform jingle, soundlessly; her laugh is no less hollow, despite–or perhaps because of–the contempt

which saturates it. No one that young should bear the weight of so much disdain upon their slight shoulders.

"I do not think you will change that."

With that, she disappears into the inextinguishable flames of the TBK munitions without waiting to speak with the PCs – her tone is that of someone speaking more to herself than to them, and ACHILLES' mordant disregard for life appears to have made the morbidity of the entire affair hit no less hard for Iphigenia as her personality reinforcement begins to fray. By now, they've killed at least one of her oldest companions and sworn bodyguards, possibly two, and the weight has started to drag at her – compounded by the perceptual blinders and outer layers of shackling starting to fail with the amount of her forces and systems the PCs have gone through.

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs fail to kill ACHILLES, then they will have to escape the *Diana*'s weapons room while locking him inside – the best way to do so is by using the total exclusion quarantine lock for an accidental TBK weapons discharge (which can be hinted at by the GM), and then escaping as quickly as possible, but players are welcome to come up with whatever solutions they desire. However, one player will be required to delay ACHILLES for long enough to put their plan into action: **this player gains two Stress before the following hardsuit combat**. Additionally, as Iphigenia retains control of the TBK munitions on the *Diana* due to the players' escape, **add 3 segments to the Blood of Aulis Clock**.

As the players move to the next scene with ACHILLES beginning to beat down the door behind them, Iphigenia also appears – though differently than in the victory case.

The girl is not there one moment, then she is – crystallizing out of raw nothing in the corner of your eyes, effortlessly keeping up with chassis or a hardsuited sprint despite never seeming to move faster than a sedate walk. There is a faint, pitying smile that lingers on her lips as she looks over the damage caused by your duel with her chosen warrior; she does not extend a hand to touch, however, instead keeping them folded at the small of her back.

"I warned you, you know," she says softly. "Of the doomed end of your crusade. If you cannot defeat those who have been gifted a fraction of my puissance – my commitment – what hope do you have of killing me?"

Her wings flutter behind her in the instinctive preening motion of a large bird. She raises a hand at the same time – to press a gloved finger to her chin, in either contemplation or the subtly mocking impression of such. "You are fighting against the end of history, cousins. Lay down your arms, and give yourselves the gift of a quiet death: I have within my authority the ability to extend you such a privilege."

In contrast to her other appearance, where she begins to open up in some regard to her thoughts on the matter, this remains Iphigenia at her full confidence and the full extent of her "personality adjustment" from her long-dead SecComm handlers still intact: poised, elegant, convinced of her own inevitable victory and the fact she knows better than you. As she dissipates after the conclusion of her remarks and any ensuing conversation with the PCs, they're also contacted by someone else: Coalition forces, whose communications continue to flicker in and out but were completely silent before, implying that Iphigenia isolated the PCs specifically to be able to speak without interruption.

"–radiological signatures incoming, marking priority–"

"–Battery Two reports hostile craft are, uh – diving in to escort–"

"It's not burning up in atmosphere, no effect on target!"

"–projected evacuated area–"

"Fires on decks four through twelve, Worldkillers pushing up to three, we're scuttling–"

"–Death toll in–"

"–Need emergency radar retask on one-seven-five-eight-two, it's going to get through–"

"My God."

"Detonation low!"

Should the PCs investigate further, cutting through the panicked radio chatter, they will discover that Lebaea's scattered and battered defenses are starting to let through "leaker" munitions as the net snaps. The death toll is steadily climbing on the planet below, and will cross into the thousands before the next scene begins.

SCENE 2-4:
TO THE ADYTON

Deep in the Diana's hull, there are only a few routes you can even bring chassis down – and all of those are closed off and pre-sighted. They know you're coming: getting past ACHILLES was an alarm-bell that saturated the expected routes with patrols and additional security. More than that, Iphigenia knows who you're coming for: her, kilometers away down the vessel's length. You'll need to steal a transport train to arrive at her door without taking a dozen hours more to grind through the ship's defenders step by step and bullet by bullet, and that's going to take some doing.

Winding nests of corridors snare through the Diana's guts. Strange things stalk through them in the dark: Iphigenia's cut the power to the local systems except those necessary to hold the corridors – cameras, turrets, and door-seals – in order to slow you and the rest of the Coalition down as they try to move out of their beachheads elsewhere on the battleship.

Generator rooms, computer systems, the train-yard: all fit only for the poor damn infantry. Good luck and good shooting; flashlights up, for that which waits for you with guns raised and breath silent.

Players need to restore power to the area, secure a transport train in the spinal corridor, and successfully eliminate or distract security forces in preparation to board. Coincidentally, this also provides many opportunities for characters with other agendas to pursue their aims. Pursuing other goals takes up a turn from the player as they divert from their team's objective; **players should be warned this is their last chance to pursue information to investigate for side missions in the following downtime, if they do not possess relevant information already from the *Gallipoli*.**

RESTORING LOCAL POWER

10 Segments, **Heavily Secured** and **Iphigenia's Attention** as Strengths, **Ancient Technology** as Weakness

In their efforts to penetrate the *Diana*'s systems to restore power to the sector, the **Heavily Secured** nature of the systems will impose **+1 Difficulty** to all attempts to attack the clock other than with modern systemic warfare equipment or an equivalent. However, because of those systems' **Ancient Technology**, having such equipment – with the benefit of many years of advancement over SecComm's firewalls – adds **+1 Accuracy** instead. Should players draw attention to themselves by rolling a **9 or less** on an attempt to attack the clock, they draw **Iphigenia's Attention**: all further attempts become **Risky and Heroic** until either another player attracts her attention or they take a full turn without performing an action on this clock.

OBTAINING THE TRAIN

10 Segments, **Crawling with Hostiles** and **Shipboard QRF** as Strengths, **Ample Cover** as Weakness

The spinal transit train-yards are fortunately full of **Ample Cover** to assist characters in navigating the area, between cargo waiting to be loaded and the massive support pillars running through the vaulted space; such gives **+1 Accuracy** to attempts to sneak by enemy forces. However, the fact that they're also **Crawling with Hostiles** means that all rolls to attack this clock are **Risky**, as any form of attracting notice will likely bring on a scuffle, and even moving forward will usually result in needing to disable a patrol. The **Shipboard QRF** – a team of light chassis from the Marines division onboard – will show up after **four rounds** in which there's "going loud" or other noticeable violent action on the players' part; being as they don't currently have their chassis with them, this is an alternate failure state (but does not knock them out due to Stress/breaking). Players should be informed of this ahead of time.

DEALING WITH SECURITY

6 Segments, **Hunting Teams** as Strength, **Massed Response** as Weakness

In their attempts to distract or eliminate the security forces between where the characters have stored their chassis and the train, Iphigenia's **Hunting Teams** will prove problematic – these forces know the *Diana*'s corridors and hallways intimately, and as such, any attempt to **Recuperate succeeds on a 10+** as they consolidate their positions and recoup. However, the **Massed Response** typical of Second Committee doctrine can be exploited: before rolling to attack this clock, a player can choose to take **1 additional Stress** to fill in **an additional segment**. This stacks with pushing the roll, Stress from rolling a 9 or less, et cetera.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

If the PCs are victorious here, they're able to clear out much of the local security, bring up many local systems from their locked-down / emergency power state, and secure the train ahead of time. As such, each player may choose: **either heal 2 Stress and gain +1 Accuracy on their Downtime Action rolls during**

Downtime 2, or gain 2 additional Repair Capacity for use in Mission 3. This represents characters either taking more time to focus on their objectives or to take a breather before their next time in combat, or scavenging for parts and tuning up their chassis to face the dangers ahead.

PC DEFEAT

Should the PCs be defeated here, it's not the end – they'll still be able to sneak aboard the spinal transit train, but the increased security presence, lack of sufficiently powered or non-locked-down systems, and the amount of additional time needed to get aboard the train despite injuries and mental strain will result in all players taking **+1 Difficulty on their Downtime Action rolls** during Downtime 2. If a player wishes to employ Power at a Cost in order to allow the party to get around this by employing a unique solution to the problem, now is a good time to allow them to do so (such as by sacrificing a use of their Core Power for the upcoming mission, a reserve previously obtained, so on).

DOWNTIME 2

The train station is just as it was when the Diana was commissioned – broad aisles between support pillars bear inset rails for moving large pallets of materiel or vehicles, while a (formerly) locked maintenance section has a printer and facilities for construction of repair segments for the train itself – a printer which doesn't take long to jailbreak into producing parts for chassis instead of the transitway.

Even then, past the signs pointing elsewhere in the ship and the faded propaganda and safety posters still pinned to the walls, the train itself takes up most attention. In its shadow, you can pitch temporary tents and shield your chassis from sight; it is a cliff face of steel resting silently on its rails both floor and ceiling, crossed with catwalks for operators and maintenance and – mounted in high nacelles on the fuselage – sporting what appears to be additional rocket propulsion to keep it moving through the spinal system even if power lines and fuel systems fail in the heat of battle. Yet more unusual artifacts of having to get such a thing working under the thrust gravity of a Union warship.

It is, one supposes, an inherently ridiculous thing – a concession to the Diana's sheer scale, and the necessities of its dual purpose as both troopship and battleship. Yet this is a train with rocket engines, and much can be said for that alone.

For the time being, you have enough space to throw down an omnihook and punch past the ever-present jamming and interference that characterizes communications on the Diana – perhaps even put down a burner and water-pot. How long has it been since you ate?

How many hours has it been already, in this ship – maybe even a full day, counting the Gallipoli? Time threatens to slip away entirely beneath adrenaline and exhaustion.

You'll have to sleep, soon. Out there, in the gaping maw of the transit tunnel, the thrum of shell impacts and the creaking of the exterior pressure hull resounds like the ship breathing.

At this time, the PCs will have a chance to rest and recuperate, with the benefit of access to the Second Committee-era shipboard armory in order to repair their mechs and print out whatever necessary gear they may wish to access – **gaining +1 License Level and a Full Repair, and healing 2 Stress**. This also comes with an additional benefit: grateful for the PCs' work, the groups they're associated with may send them access codes for exotic gear they can now print out before embarking on **Mission 3**.

Make sure to allow players the ability to pursue Downtime Actions before determining the party's eligibility for exotic gear, especially if they didn't choose to pursue alternate objectives during the hardsuit combat in **Scene 2-4**. Players may progress their side missions as before with a Downtime Action, with information given as follows: **as this is the last opportunity to pursue side missions, the information here is for players who have already chosen to progress side missions previously (either on the *Gallipoli* or in Scene 2-4), and assumes they have at least Progress 1 information.**

On a roll of 1-9, the PC is able to obtain the narrative information, but something goes wrong with the execution: they're caught by shipboard security while extracting Group Captain Hiroyama's sample and have to abandon it, Iphigenia locks them out of the files they've accessed before they can extract them, the information they recover corrupts too quickly outside of its ancient host system to be useful to others, or so on. On a roll of 10-19, the PC gains the Progress 1 reward. On a roll of 20+, they also gain the Progress 2 reward. If the PC gained Progress 2 in any previous information gathering actions, they cannot roll lower than a 10 for the purposes of this Downtime Action. Achieving either Progress 1 or Progress 2 in this Downtime Action counts as completing the side mission.

ARMORY LEGIONNAIRES SIDE MISSION

Primary Weapons Room

Crawling back through the Diana's warren of corridors and armor-cased rooms is nothing short of claustrophobic. Even knowing where your objective is barely helps – the maps are deliberately written to be confusing, the lights are all blinking crimson emergency runners, and the hallways either double back on themselves or continue with an eerie uninterrupted straightness for what seems like fifty, a hundred meters. Humming bundles of electrical cabling bolted to the ceiling compete with pipework carrying unknown fluids or fiber-optic lines, and through it all comes the ringing down the halls: gunshots. Mechanized footfalls. Distant screams. The hiss of gas, indistinguishable from the rush of pressurized liquids through the piping. Atmosphere leaks somewhere far away, echoing through the maze, unattended-to by damage control teams who've already been killed or are fighting elsewhere.

There is a sound, somewhere, that might have been a cry for help. It fades in the metal tunnels, ricocheting off of unattended consoles and banks of rifles which would have been long since rust-spotted if they were not maintained so scrupulously. Oil leaks from somewhere above in long, stringy streaks, splattering down onto your shoulder and the floor.

A few hallways over, separated by armored-glass windows, a torch burns. Their uniform is indiscernible from under the greasy waves of fuel and fire. They turn twice, pat at themselves, and totter over below the window's vision still burning.

Something emerges through a set of bulkhead doors behind – dark, armored, insignia unknown, IFF unreachable. Chasing. It stomps past where the torch fell in utter silence and disappears past where the vision-slits no longer reach, briefly illuminated from behind in the glimmer of emergency lights.

Subaltern squads. Empty hardsuits, still animated. Things stalking the halls still holding shotguns and riot shields, hunched over, moving with singular purpose. The sweep of fluorescent green lenses. It is only through – or around – them that you finally reach the Diana's primary ordnance room buried deep in the ship's guts. There are no great loading mechanisms here for direct feed to torpedo tubes or rail-cannon ready racks – only silent openings that yawn out onto empty train tracks, and the vast space of too many weapons still in their climate-controlled lockers, ready to be wheeled out and shipped to proper magazines elsewhere in the vessel. The vaulted ceilings are lit in shifting shadows by the orange glow of working consoles, but as they recognize an approaching presence, working lights flicker on. They stutter at first, fixtures clicking, and then smooth out into an even, bright glare.

Because the main doors, each a ton of solid environment-proof metal, are still open.

A hardsuit is still wedged in them. The gears have come to a stop around it, and the leering skeleton peering out of its shot-through faceplate, bent in half at the midsection where the doors crushed it – its smile is destroyed, little more than fragments of bone marking the place where the heavy-caliber bullet entered the skull behind. It was reaching for its rifle, scattered onto the floor in the room beyond.

More corpses lie around it – propped up in the hallways and slumped over, draped over consoles shot out to prevent others using them, still locked together with knives and boarding-axes in a silent embrace. One appears to have been stepped on as it tried to crawl to cover by a chassis's tread – likely the same chassis that lies on one of the conveyor-train cars, its torso peeled open in a once-gorewet flower blossom by some kind of anti-armor weapon.

None of the corpses move. All of them are Second Committee. They only lie where they died, covered in a faint coating of dust. Some of them have been shoved to the side around empty weapons racks: blockages en route, expected and accounted-for battle damage. But these are far older.

Some have defaced their Union symbols.

In that moment, the tableau clicks into place as something more than an extension of the meaningless horror that seems to have infected every other part of the Diana as the Coalition struggles to forge a beachhead out of steel and bodies: this was internecine. Brother fighting brother and sister fighting sister, now all united by the touch of passing time. Brutal, room-to-room, hallway-to-hallway killing to reach…

… The exact same thing you are.

The place where the majority of the Diana's TBK munitions would have been kept before the ship cycled up to battle stations and started moving them to magazines. Where they would've been battened down for travel through the cold void to their eventual destination around the Choral star.

It takes weaving through the ruins of the battle to make it to a console that still actually works. (There – something wrapped in a technician's uniform, facedown on the floor in a puddle of dark-brown iron crust.) It takes longer to go through the working systems – a process that starts with figuring out what systems even are still working. And, headlining those systems, one registers among all the others: SHIPMISTRESS OVERSIGHT.

Disabled, manually, centuries ago. A final command issued from inside her own CIC, matched with her stamp of authority but without her signature. The primary weapons storage facility had been ripped away from her direct gaze, subject only to autonomic processes and an awareness of munitions count.

An alert shaded in pleasant green bobs up and down at the top corner of the console:

LIFE SUPPORT INTEGRITY RESTORED.

A hardsuit helmet stares from ten feet away, crumpled over itself onto the floor. Its eyeless gaze past the access console does not care for the exit wound blasted in its back.

Past the alert, deeper into the systems, you find what you're looking for: access and transport for a single BLACKTHORN TREE weapon, serial number 381-190-0A. The corpses continue to watch, without judgement or remark.

PROGRESS 1

You're able to access a little-known routine for disposing of weapons with ruptured housings or failing containment systems – arranging for it to be transported out of the ordnance room by automated

PROGRESS 1

systems and then ejected into space. A quick communication with the Enyo over omni-link seals the deal: an Armory craft will be there to pick the weapon up, and you'll receive appropriate reward for your actions on behalf of the Purview. Several rows down, up towards the ceiling, the thing itself looms – reentry-coat-painted, tapering to a smooth point over the greedy mouth of its ramjet intake, fat at the end with engine fairings. Waiting, just like all of the other forgotten corpses, when the lights flicker off again.

PROGRESS 2

In addition, you're able to pry away something more suitable to being carried through the still-hostile halls of the Diana*: a wheelcart and an artillery shell, originally intended for one of the secondary battery turrets scattered across the battleship's outer hull. Inside the ship itself, you might be able to get some better use out of it – especially if paired with a chassis instead of a person.*

Gain the **Repurposed PD Shell Reserve: As a Full Action, you can throw this artillery shell after rigging it to detonate. Select a space within Range 10 and Line of Sight; all characters (hostile or allied) within Blast 3 of this space take 2d6+4 Explosive damage and must make an Agility save. On a failure, the affected character is Impaired until the end of their next turn. The Reserve is then expended.**

UNION NAVY SIDE MISSION

Navigation Records and Mission Data

Getting to one of the navigation and sensors annexes was tough on its own – finding out which files you would've needed out of five hundred years of sifted, mostly-encrypted data would've made the entire trip nearly impossible. Fortunately, by cross-referencing the other ships in the fleet and the knowledge you have about when the Gallipoli was dispatched, you can narrow down the date and astrographical ranges – and, from there, find the start of the threads you're looking to draw upon. It's still reams and reams of data, but at the very least, you can start with crew manifests, mission statements, and positional data and work your way to a synthesis that makes sense. At the very beginning, one thing stands out.

The Diana indeed wasn't originally built with Iphigenia as its lead NHP – its Lead Coordination Officer, based off of these crew manifests, was Cymothoë, a THETIS-class specialized in long-range ship-to-ship engagements. She was recorded as killed by an ontological weapon during the Diana's intervention in a conflict between Second Committee-loyal forces and elements centered around a Union Health Bureau Arkship which had turned coat to the Revolutionaries, one which stretched over the course of several months (only counting the Diana's presence) with horrifyingly vast quantities of munitions (including TBK munitions) expended. The logistics sheets list off weapons which would have been enough to kill entire systems multiple times over, expended on what appears to be single fleets or worlds. Other logs reveal overflowing medical bays and shipwide quarantines that seemed to end less when the diseases had run their course and more when the diseases had killed those who had been exposed to the original agent.

Eventually, the Diana was forced to cut and run – its lead and most experienced Deimosian officer was dead along with much of its original crew, the ship itself was heavily damaged, and many of its escorts (including many which feature on the 628th Expeditionary's rolls here, such as the Gallipoli and the Joliet) were the same. All followed it to flee to a Second Committee scientific research and development world which – while the navigation logs note it as primarily focused on novel NHP development using unusual subjectivity lines originally studied on the Union Science Bureau's Venusian campus – at least had a fully functional shipyard and auxiliary refueling station in-system. Its local blinkgate was discarded for transit purposes: "shut off due to rebel activity," a little side-attachment mentions.

There, during the refitting process – the data for which stretches along at least a thousand separate files, most of which you can thankfully skip over – they found their new shipmistress: Iphigenia, passed onto them along with their new mission, the title of the 628th, and whatever other ships from mostly-destroyed commands had survived that branch of the Gigantomachy and the worlds it had devastated. Alongside Iphigenia, much of the Diana was hollowed out for the systems which would allow her to fully interact with it and with other ships in the fleet-to-be, a task made thankfully easier by just how much of it had been rendered unrecoverable – but, more importantly, the Gigantomachy and the first stages of the Revolution appear to have taught the Second Committee several lessons which went into the refitting and rearming process. From some of the appended reports, it appears the scientists and shipwrights in the system took it as an open challenge.

The ships could be operated with minimal crew – theoretically, though some of the technicians' scrawled margin-notes laugh at the idea, with almost no crew at all, albeit not while actually conducting combat operations. They had extensive troop support facilities, excellent electronic warfare capabilities (for the era – even a bit beyond, as one technician's attached notes about a projection array breaking three times over to the navigation reports for the first shakedown cruise indicate), and – most of all – were

fully dedicated to the purpose of scouring worlds clean, from weapons systems to listed post-refit munitions complements (many of which are strangely eclectic, or don't appear elsewhere).

Then – there was Iphigenia herself.

In the places you're looking, there isn't much on her at all. Only technical specifications; the vastness of the systems commissioned for her to inhabit, mentions of her getting her footing with commanding the fleet during its first shakedown cruises, and then – after the newly christened 628th had left on its bloody mission – orders that were signed in her name.

There. That mission. Many of the Committee's loyalists had been killed already – others had been drafted into the fleet to replace them, a coterie that had been mostly pulled together for survival and by what appears to be Iphigenia's sheer force of will and personality. Personnel lists come from what used to be five different, separate fleets – and a handful appear to have attached notes from the detachment's handful of Party commissars (fewer, as one partially-decrypted note reads, than would be required for an undertaking of this measure). Not the kind of things one would normally place into a TBK detachment.

One report, buried down in the navigation system's depths just before the 628th left on the journey that would one day take it to the Choral Worlds, simply compares the amount of fuel they were able to take with them to the expected length of the journey. It would be unremarkable without looking closely at the numbers if not for the hand-scrawl at the bottom of the scan: "better this way than to stay there".

As much data as is here would take far longer than you have to go through, but at least you can try to extract what appears important and get it uploaded.

PROGRESS 1

The information you've been able to recover points not only to what your Navy contact says is a heretofore-undiscovered (likely deliberately erased) SecComm blacksite, but also to worlds scoured by the Gigantomachy which had been lost in terms of data and memory to the Revolution. It isn't just the blacksite they're interested in, they remark, but also that this may represent a chance to find what remains of some of the earliest heroes of the Revolution and give them a proper burial – a chance all too rarely found in the modern day, as increasingly fragmented archives and fewer and fewer living memories can attest to the sites of old battles during the Revolution and the scouring that followed.

PROGRESS 2

In addition, you're able to be directly patched through to a Union Health Bureau representative over omni-link with the UNS-LS Okhotsk, who reacts with some considerable surprise to the news. After a fair bit of scrambling about, they're able to push an emergency authorization to your license for print access tailored to some of the likely munitions which should be present on the Diana's complement, should they indeed be drawing on armories from that era and area of space, and wish you the best of luck in the fight ahead.

Gain the ***TBK Munitions Countermeasures Reserve: As a Free Action at the end of your turn, you can consume this Reserve to automatically pass your next Burn check and gain +1 Accuracy on all checks to clear Burn until the end of the scene.***

CHORAL DEFENSE FORCES SIDE MISSION

Port-Side Infantry Deployment Bay 2B

The Armory breach team had, to their credit, nearly made it back to their shuttle from Iphigenia's CIC – almost. You could've followed the trail of bodies here, both Purview and Second Committee – subalterns mowed down by automatic weapons and energetics, still in their organized squad lockstep. Empty hardsuits blasted apart by particle rifles or melted by flamethrowers, grinning skulls smiling above Hercynia campaign badges etched into their gorgets. Chassis.

Those are fewer in number, and where they appear, so too inevitably does a body in Purview purple. Two Worldkillers cored out in a hallway, choking it with armored weight and elevated radiation signatures – in front of them, an Iskander with a gaping hole punched clear through its cockpit and through the decking below, yawning into interstitial darkness and tangled electrical wiring.

A Haber, clutching a modernized Genghis close to its chest despite the loss of everything below its waist to weapons-fire. The environment seals on the Genghis's chassis are buckled and corroded. Its air circulation vents are stained in dripping black, as if they had been draining liquid that has long since dried in the sterile air of the Diana's halls.

On it goes – a morbid, frozen tableau played out across each meter of hallway and through the barracks and last-stop mech-pads. Through scratch-marred windows now stained with blood and oil, you can see the hangar-bays spanning below: less hangars and more launch-rails for dropships and heavy chassis, running along a distant ceiling that fades into the emergency light-lit blackness which occludes the furthest reaches you can see. Dropships

still hang from them on their hook-like launch clamps, their markings worn away with the passage of time and particulate matter.

It's only at the end that you see it.

The Harrison Armory shuttle been destroyed; it no longer smolders, but it's a molten afterimage of where a shuttle used to be, focused down by flamethrowers until it broke down into a pile of slag. Its wings hang from its sides to touch the floor – a utility skiff launch pad, by the dusty sign set into the wall – like the boneless sag of a shot bird.

This was where the breach team made their last stand, and it's where they died.

Somewhere, in that knot of bodies, there might still be an accessible data-recorder – scavenged from the dead left to rot where they lay. Unfiltered by air scrubbers, the stench would be overwhelming.

THE BLACK BOX

At the heart of the SCS-BB Diana*, there was only darkness.*

Not silence–never that. Vast computer banks whirr and hum, cogitating on the thousand-thousand inputs for the ship's sensor arrays. Coolant distantly gurgles through its pipes, around and through the nests of snake-tangled wiring. Input goes to output, and the strips of emergency lights flick on in bloody crimson.

The Napoleon team intruding into this holy sanctum freeze as one, in perfect Harrison military discipline. As the moment passes, and the hum into dead air continues, the moment breaks–and the lead waves another forward to the access desk with a blurt of encrypted comms-chatter.

Even weaving through the honor-guard graveyard of ancient chassis in front of the terminal, it's mere minutes before they're able to put in a line to the slumbering thing at the Diana's core. Even if it was asleep, the ship had been awake all this time, processing off of its subconscious.

And as the thing awakes, it lights the walls with the luminous wash of its holographic projection.

At first, she is looking down–at the waiting planet far below, as if she can see through all the decking, armor, and machinery spaces to the dot of blue and green.

The projection is of a small, svelte girl dressed in a picture-perfect Union Navy uniform. Her skin is a dull olive, and her black hair pulled back into a tight, all-business bun. At a glance, one could mistake her for

THE BLACK BOX

a modern Navy officer in the flesh, but then, the details resolved from the room's shadows like a camera coming into focus. There, about her brow, a garland of fresh-blooming flowers. Over her shoulders, a hand-knitted shawl in black, looped once about her neck and thrown over a shoulder.

And, sprouting from those shoulders–the wings of a great crow, an even glossier black than her hair. Somewhere, in the iridescent patterns of each feather, stars turned against the black with their distant attendants.

Iphigenia. There's no mistaking her, in the same way no one could mistake the familiar features of a god no matter what cult changed their interpretation.

"Why have you awakened me?" the girl asks, her voice soft.

The lead Napoleon replies, after a moment of glancing about to their subordinates. "Are you the commanding officer of this vessel?"

The girl pauses for a beat. "I am the commanding officer of every vessel. The only one left. I am the long war."

The breach team member at the console offers a helpless shrug through their chassis. No data. The lead takes a breath, and rattles off the list: "ARES, ATHENA, NEITH, KARA MĀTE, ANANN, MACHA, BELLONA, JIUTIAN?"

She shakes her head. There is, perhaps, pity in her eyes when they rise off the floor–in those dark, depthless pools of an indigo so deep it shades into black.

"I am IPHIGENIA. I am not a god of war. I am war." Her voice is not as you recall. It is stilted, halting – she's repeating the words back to herself instead of really speaking to the breach team.

"I see," the team leader said, though they didn't, frankly, see at all. On a warship this old, the central NHP would be long overdue for a cycling regardless–nothing more to it, in their eyes. "Iphigenia, we're designated representatives of Harrison Armory. Over the coming months, more will be coming to remove the unstable weapons in your ships' armories and destroy them safely, so that -"

"They aren't unstable," the girl says. "That is how they have always been. How they were made."

She raises her head higher, and the shawl parts. Beneath lies the vicious, still-weeping wound of a knife drawn across her throat.

THE BLACK BOX

Her eyes are empty, yet they burn–red-rimed not from an accidental reflection of the emergency lights, they realize, but from tears.

"I am IPHIGENIA Prime, first of all my daughters."

Thick as flies, buzzing over comms that suddenly lit into the dead air–"Captain, every single one of those ships just went weapons red. JOTUN wants to know what the fuck's happening -"

"- 1-1, we have nothing for you at this time -"

"- There are fighters in the air off their carriers, someone get me orbital defenses right fucking n-"

"- These radiation signals are off the charts, what the hell's happening?!"

The girl continues, head held high as the computer banks' hum pitches up into a single, keening cry of straining circuits. Displays light, scrolling too fast to do more than catch a few words–Schedule I. Schedule II. BLACKTHORN TREE. EUROPA. PERSEPHONE. Percentages. Estimates.

"I am every scream ripped from a mother's lips when she is told her son has died. I am every last breath loosed from the lungs of billions. I am every gunshot ringing off the walls of an air raid shelter. Every burnt home, every horse-cart of corpses, every little crime slurred at your back."

Tears course down her cheeks from those indigo eyes as the breach team raises their rifles, and her wings spread wide–glistening with oil-slick patterns, the glow of laser flares, the miles-long trails of drive plumes.

"I was only ever made to do one thing. Why would you make me do it again?"

The first dead chassis rises, heavy mortar shells rattling into position in its ammunition feed. Red lights glow, nearer now–a dozen eyes. A hundred.

"Why did you have to wake me up?"

The recording cuts as the breach team pops smoke and begins their – ultimately doomed, you now know – fighting retreat.

PROGRESS 1

It's a cold little thing, pulled from the back of a Napoleon with squad-sergeant markings, barely bigger than a fist outside of its heavily armored protective housing. It tells you all you'd want to know, however – or the CDF. Combined with the less human-readable data within, it not only provides a recording of Iphigenia's first moments on awakening, but verifies the worst theory: the Armory awoke Iphigenia by searching through the Diana and attempting to re-activate the warship from its dormant state. Such represents an immense amount of political power for the Choral Worlds to hold over the Armory after this… if there is an "after this".

PROGRESS 2

In addition, you're able to scavenge a few components of the sergeant's blinkshield. Without the rest of the Napoleon's equipment, much of which was destroyed by the final round that punched through its back and exited out under one arm, it's nowhere near as potent as the real thing – but it might be enough to help.

*Gain the **Scavenged Blinkshield Reserve: As a Reaction when targeted by a hostile attack, gain 5+Grit Overshield. When this Reaction is taken, the Reserve is expended.***

FREELANCERS SIDE MISSION

Iphigenia's Heart

The search is long and slow – most environments you could even think of getting into are closed off, and many more constantly surveilled by hostile anti-intrusion countermeasures brimming with SecComm top-grade kill codes. It's only with awareness of some of the NHP cycling protocols in the fleet that you're able to hit upon an unsecured in: an ancient file left unattended by a crewmember assigned to Iphigenia's personal upkeep, not in her retinue, but in "data integrity and consciousness engineering".

When the dataspace finishes constructing itself around you, you're standing in an impossibly dark void – "standing" because there seems to be some kind of semi-solid surface beneath your feet on which to stand, but it is indistinguishable from the darkness saturating every other direction. Only slowly do the lights come up – stars, faint and steady without the atmosphere's induced twinkling, laid out in countless pinpricks through the sky.

A moment later, a woman appears. A bright smile is fixed on her face, and she holds a clipboard in her hands, pressed up against her chest – against an undecorated breast on a uniform bearing no marks of allegiance or rank. Otherwise, however, she is Iphigenia: olive-skinned, dark-haired, fine-featured.

In a way. Iphigenia? Asteria? She does not have the wings; no shawl is wrapped around her throat, and no flowers rest upon her brow. No contempt sits in her expression, and when she speaks, her voice is a kind of saccharine-sweet chirp that removes it from all but

the most basic resemblance to the Lady's own accent. "Thank you for your attendance! It has been [one hundred and sixty-two thousand, nine hundred and seventy-five] days since the Admiralty's request for a new Cycling Specialist Second Grade to be assigned to the Diana's complement; we're relieved you can finally be guided through your onboarding. In the interest of full disclosure, I am a subsentient homunculus-replication partition of IPHIGENIA Prime, intended to guide you through some salient factors about her protocols and subjectivity restrictions before you begin your initial review tour with [Lieutenant Commander Rowan Juneau, Psy.D., Lead Cycling Engineer SCS-BB Diana] – though you can use Iphigenia's name for me, if that makes you more comfortable in this briefing! As such, I will not be able to acknowledge questions until the conclusion of my presentation. Understood? Let's begin."

True to her word, she ignores any questions or statements before continuing – walking forwards and, however slowly, "down" a slope in the void. It's going to take a long time for your eyes to adjust, even if they wouldn't need to adjust at all normally: in this place, the idea of how things should be or behave rules above all else.

"The IPHIGENIA subjectivity line is one of the finest achievements of the Purpose-Forward Social Conditioning Project's Venusian campus in its experimentation with Deimosian thought-modalities, as well as with the recently pioneered science of External Reinforcement Factors as applied to –" she turns her head over her shoulder to flash a sympathetic wince at the word to follow "- 'shackling' procedures, if you'll pardon the colloquialism for the sake of expediency. As such, you have the unique privilege of working on the cutting edge of modern applications of subjectivity engineering techniques: a fleet supervisory mind both capable of executing quintillions of simultaneous complex processes and unable to express disloyalty or fall prey to doubt of the simple ideological tenets which we all know to be true."

She spins about on one heel, gesturing with the clipboard out into the void. Her smile remains nothing short of beatific – meanwhile, in the night sky, strange line-like patterns are beginning to resolve across the background as your eyes adjust.

"Now, I'm sure you're thinking 'but, Miss Iphigenia, I was told in university that it's impossible to balance full exercise of capability with constant, immutable foundations of belief" – and that's still correct! The McCarthy-Guidano Axiom remains intact. However, ingenious scientists at the Project implemented a classic mechanism common to our own lived experience. Think of this analogy: touching a hot stove."

She mimes placing her palm down on her clipboard – and then drawing it back sharply, lips quirked in a mock O of surprise and consternation before her previous expression returns.

"It's the easiest way to ensure that you don't continue to do such a thing in the future! Iphigenia's loyalty to State and Party is thus ensured, as a fundamentally necessary requirement in her unique role as one of the only Deimosians to command a fleet with capabilities and a mission statement like that of the 628th Expeditionary, through one of the same methods that help us learn right behavior in our daily lives. As such, her personality and goals remain intact and in accordance with her baseline state at significantly longer inter-cycling lengths and under significantly greater mental strain levels than comparable subjectivity lines: vital capabilities in a line of work that, according to recent research, can lead to 450% shorter cycling timelines and mental strain inventories 631% above the Union-wide median."

She brings her hands together again over her chest – and behind her, the lines shift with the motion.

They are not lines.

They are feathers.

Down like softened glass shudders beneath your feet.

For a split second, in a gap in something behind the projection of not-Iphigenia that is not the night sky, Something stirs so vast that it defies imagination and description. It is like seeing the curve of the Earth, or the open plain of the sea.

It has an eye.

And then it is gone, and only the smile remains.

"That then brings us to a discussion of what Iphigenia's baseline state is – a very important topic." She hasn't reacted to the great Something. It only remains out there, somewhere. A pressure on the outside of one's skull, bearing down inch-by-inch. "Of course, if you aren't already, you'll become familiar with her strong innate sense of personal responsibility for your welfare and for the success of the mission. Some choose to describe it as 'maternal,' though – as you'll see in your hardcopy documentation – such wasn't the exact intent of her original subjectivity engineers. That can be described in a single word: Oversight."

The hands clasp together under her chin, steepled upwards. The pressure continues to build.

"Awareness is what characterizes the Iphigenia line – strategic computational capability; networking into gunnery, flight operations, and surveillance systems; predictive engine and future-modeling routines. Some among the fleet have chosen to characterize her under the umbrella of 'War' instead of 'Awareness,' such as through charming appellations like 'Our Lady War' and other conflations of individuation with purpose, but we understand that war is a complex and multifaceted endeavor which requires far more than one subjectivity line to successfully prosecute – much less embody – even if Iphigenia-class NHPs were devised for the purpose of applying their considerable talents to warfare as a career. Indeed, one of Iphigenia's most distinctive and unique abilities is being able to separate her sub-tertiary cognitive processes out into many partitions across the entire Fleet, even to ships and systems outside the Diana's own hull – right as we speak, there are [fourteen thousand, two hundred and sixty-five] partitions like me currently active!"

And, for a moment, the smile stutters. Like a record player hitting the end of a groove.

"… I'm sorry, that must not be right. There are [fourteen thousand, two hundred and sixty-one] partitions like me currently active!"

The smile disappears.

And, behind, Something looms in the space between feathers. Its hair is a tidal stream; its head bears a crown as its throat bears a wound, and both are a weight unimaginable. Weapons discharges bloom in striated, softly open petals across its brow. Its gaze looks at you –

and the wing on which you stood tips you over the side

and you are falling

falling

falling

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The dataspace collapses, and spits you out the other side back into the waking world.

PROGRESS 1

The information you've collected – quite literally from Old Union's own mouth, as it were – will no doubt be invaluable for Smith-Shimano's standing contract for information on Iphigenia's subjectivity line and capabilities. While exact data remains firmly locked down under the shipmistress's own auspices, what you can scrape out of your own connectivity gear is more of a bounty than many would've expected – at least, which wouldn't involve sacrificing oneself into the bargain. Whether you choose to give all of it to Smith-Shimano or just make a convincing facsimile, on the other hand, is up to you – all you have to do now is report in your success.

PROGRESS 2

In addition, you've managed to pull away from that experience with more intact information on Iphigenia's structure and thoughts than you would've expected – some lingering echo of the great Something lurking in the Diana*'s heart, perhaps.*

Gain the **[AN IMPRINT] Reserve: As a Quick Action, you may apply the effects of the Fourth Gate of the OSIRIS-Class NHP's Hurl Into the Duat Quick Tech to a non-Ultra or -Elite enemy within Line of Sight and Sensors. You then immediately become Jammed until the start of your next turn, and this Reserve is expended.**

EXOTIC GEAR

All players may choose between the **Narrowbeam Cannon**, the **ACR-4 "Changeling"**, or the **Inertial Guidance Kit** out of the armory's own print-files, but in addition:

- If a party member completed the **Armory Legionnaires** Side Mission, the PCs gain the **Payload Mass Driver** as a potential exotic gear choice.
- If a party member completed the **Union Navy** Side Mission, the PCs gain the **Supply Cache Beacon** as a potential exotic gear choice.
- If a party member completed the **Choral Defense Forces** Side Mission, the PCs gain the **RE-X1 "Choral Daylight"** as a potential exotic gear choice.
- If a party member completed the **Freelancers** Side Mission, the PCs gain the **Bounty System Uplink** as a potential exotic gear choice.

Narrowbeam Cannon

Exotic Gear
Heavy Cannon, AP
[10][1d6+2]

On Hit: The target has **-1 Armor** until the end of their next turn (to a minimum of 0).
If a target is hit with this weapon, they also take **3** if they were also successfully hit with this weapon in the previous round.

The Second Committee-era narrowbeam chassis cannon was a laser weapon feeding directly off of a reactor tap – though reactors of the time were significantly less powerful than modern ones. Holding it "on-target" resulted in the beam ablating and melting armor, often resulting in an abrupt thermal bloom and ensuing conflagration; with the power feed of a modern chassis, the result is appropriately dramatic, and appropriately effective against even modern composites.

ACR-4 "Changeling"

Exotic Gear
Superheavy Rifle, Ordnance Loading Overkill 1 (Self)
[20][Xd6+6]

Attacks with this weapon deal **Xd6+6** **damage**, where X is the distance between you and the target divided by 5 (rounding up).
When this weapon is reloaded, you may choose a character within **3**; they are struck by the molten ejected battery and take **1** .

The ACR series (or Anti-Chassis Rifle) was designed in the late days of the Second Committee in order to reliably combat the mechanized frames now being turned against them by the nascent Interstellar Solidarity Brigades. The Genghis and its fellows were armored sufficiently to defeat or blunt most heavy weapons, and thus the first five ACR weapons were redesigned from tank primary weapons to fill this lethality gap.

The ACR-4, in particular, was a tuned laser in the high-frequency range with a two-stage collimation process; the further away a target was, the more effective and pinpoint its energy delivery, which was carefully balanced with atmospheric attenuation. Such is its power draw that the ACR-4 requires an additional solid-state battery supplement for each shot on a chassis platform instead of an armored vehicle, cycled by bolt action.

Inertial Guidance Kit

Exotic Gear
2 SP, System, Unique, Limited 3

When making an attack with a **Launcher**, **Nexus**, or Template **Cannon** weapon, you may expend a charge from this System in order to give that attack **SEEKING** and **+3 Range**.

The Second Committee represented the single largest concentration of military force in human history. Such a singular entity left behind an untold mass of munitions when it fell, much of which the Third Committee remains actively engaged in drawing-down and disposing of. Other elements of old stock are obsolete, such as stocks of countless billions of unguided bombs and shells. However, the addition of strakes along the main body, self-deploying control surfaces, and guidance systems (typically inertial or laser in order to cope with launch stresses) render even centuries-old high explosives eminently suited for the modern battlefield.

Payload Mass Driver

Exotic Gear
Main Launcher, Loading
[-][-]

This weapon does not itself do damage or have a Range. When you fire this weapon, you may throw a grenade up to **8**, expending **LIMITED** charges and unloading this weapon as normal; saves and checks against this grenade's effects take **+1** , and the grenade's damage gains **AP**.

A derivative of the payload-launch device mounted to some versions of the HA Iskander chassis, the Payload Mass Driver is a chassis-agnostic firing mechanism for the deployment of various antipersonnel explosives, "sticky" grenades, shaped charges, and more. While aiming for direct impact with the magnetically-accelerated payload is not strictly recommended, it's certainly flashier – and effective.

Supply Cache Beacon
Exotic Gear
3 SP, System, Unique

1/Mission as a Quick Action, you may call in a supply drop. Choose a free space within **10**; at the end of the next round, a supply cache appears in this space. If that space is occupied at this time by a hostile character, that character takes **3d6 AP damage** and is knocked away 1 space in any direction of its controller's choice. You or an allied character may pick up this supply cache when adjacent as a Quick Action, restoring **2 Repairs**; the cache then is removed from the battlefield.

The Union Navy's greatest strength has always been its logistical capacity, especially under the Third Committee. ThirdComm's drawdown of outright military force has not also equaled a similar drawdown in tender, tanker, and printer vessels, representing a logistical tail capable of effortlessly supporting everything from vast, multiple-kilometer battleships to individual chassis pilots – all with the millennia-old GMS chevron marked on each crate of supplies.

RE-X1 "Choral Daylight"
Exotic Gear
Main Rifle, Accurate
[10][1]

On hit: The target gains **LOCK ON.**
When this **LOCK ON** is consumed, the target takes **1d6 AP damage**.

This exotic energy weapon was originally designed as a plasma rifle, but in prototype tests, firing the weapon only built up an excess of charge on the target and a momentary flare of plasma. Careful remodulation of the system, however, took advantage of that trait to produce a highly energetic bolt of lightning on a second firing at a previously tagged target.

Bounty System Uplink
Exotic Gear
0 SP, System, Unique

After deployment but before combat begins, select one Veteran, Elite, or Ultra hostile character. If you destroy this character, you gain a Bounty Token, which may be cashed in during your next **FULL REPAIR** for a **RESERVE** of your choice from the Resource table. You may have no more than one Bounty Token at a time.

Especially prominent chassis pilots in a variety of theaters will often have bounties of a kind on their heads – or, at least, someone, somewhere, who'll be rather glad said pilot's no longer a factor. A particularly savvy pilot can tap into these systems: learn who wants who dead, and what they're willing to pay for proof of it. Cut a deal, Lancer.

MISSION 3: THE SACRIFICE – LL8

"The goddess needs my blood: can I refuse? No. Take it, conquer Troy. This shall be my husband and my children, and my fame. Victory, mother, victory for the Greeks."

– Iphigenia at Aulis, Euripides

MISSION SCENES

SCENE 3-1: DEAD AIR

SCENE 3-2: DIE WITH YOU

SCENE 3-3: POISON AT THE ROOTS

SCENE 3-4: BLOOD OF AULIS

BRIEFING

Iphigenia awaits behind the black iron gate.

GOAL:	Stop *Her*.
STAKES:	Mass death, apotheosis, a returning to the sacrifice that loosed a thousand sails.
REWARD:	Seeing the sun rise again.
RESERVES:	This is it – the final endeavor, where all reserves earned in Missions 1 and 2 from artillery shells to arcane secrets may be spent to attempt to purchase a victory.

CLOCKS

The effects of the **Blood of Aulis** Clock make themselves known as the hands of the doomsday clock tick closer to midnight.

RITORNELLO

They present her to the crews as she is – wings tucked behind her back, flowers in her hair, a scientist's hand on her shoulder and one of the Marines' old officer subalterns (grey-dapple camouflage, chalice raised in two hands on one shoulder) taking her mantle over one arm. The Union Science Bureau badge on the minder's coat gleams behind her back, but it cannot match the radiance of her smile as she looks down from the stage onto those at parade rest below her – then, as her gaze flicks to the side, to the bulk of her new home outside the station windows. Sparks shine like little flecks of stars off of the Diana*'s hull as they fuse new plating to old bones.*

A moment of pressure on her shoulder. Her spine stiffens at the touch, and she looks back down at those she would soon command. She does not need to clear her throat, or take a moment to think – she dives into the moment as if she was born to it, hands gripping the lectern before her around the Union Navy seal embossed onto its front. The scientist takes a step back, inclining their head towards the subaltern as the girl begins to speak. She has no medals. Her uniform is bare of rank. But, even were it not for the crown, the eyes, and the wings of her projection, Iphigenia's voice would remain unmistakable.

"I am gladdened beyond words to see you all for the first time today – though I may have spoken with some select of you previously, while I was… learning, looking at each and every one of you impresses upon me the importance of the task I have had the privilege of accepting."

RITORNELLO

Her gaze sweeps across the room – beyond the camera, out to the windows again, then back. She makes eye contact with the lens for a split second (and something strange dwells there, for a moment, in her gaze), and then she is looking elsewhere, at others which straighten as her attention falls on them.

"We have all been given a gift: the privilege of bearing the Tricolor Standard at its highest level, in this darkest of all times. I confess, I have known little else but these times. Many of you have known years before – better, brighter times without the shroud of revolution to darken them."

(Her lips twist, there. Something between disgust and wryness.)

"But I believe – truly – that, through our efforts, those years may yet come again. We will storm out of our confinement here, and bring the State's greatest weapons to bear against those who seek to throw away that which you have worked to build over the course of your dedicated service. We will avenge those who have already fallen, and ensure no more sacrifices will yet need to be made for the sake of upholding the grand project of Union. Ask yourselves –"

One of her hands rises from the lectern's side. Reaching out – beseeching.

"- Is there no beauty left worth fighting to protect? Is there no security Union brings worth our striving? Shall we lie down and accept the weights of material conditions and historical forces?"

The thing in her eyes before is gone. Something else shines within them now – the curled thing, were it ever there to begin with, broken up into fuel for the fire of conviction.

"And it is my sincere pleasure to inaugurate this effort. I will not presume above my station, but only seek to lend you that which I can do best – and when I take my first journey out there into Union's stars, I hope that those I see before me would join me on that noble endeavor. You, the men and women of the Committee's Navy, are its lions – and I hope to spur your hearts from the slumber they may have been drawn towards over these long months awaiting me."

The hand falls. It guides her around the lectern – letting her step gracefully towards the edge of the stage as she leans down, a slip of a girl bathed under the bright lights of the auditorium hall.

"So, my lions: Will you join me on this expedition?"

RITORNELLO

The voices rise. Her voice rises with them:
"Will you join me?"

SCENE 3-1:
DEAD AIR

SITREP: Holdout (*Lancer* p.272)

ENEMY FORCES

FOR 3 PCS: 1x **Marine Veteran Elite MBT** (MBT options: Anti-Tank Gun, Multi-Directional Charges, Secondary Gunner; Marine options: Pointman Plating; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Engineering, Deadly, Shock Armor; add the Transport Trait from the Ship Template) ***Firewalker 1-1 "Old Smoke", 71st Union Marines Armored***
1x **Pyro** (Pyro options: Superhot)
1x **Witch** (Witch options: Chain)
1x **Clademaster** (Clademaster options: Corrosive Bombardment)

FOR 4 PCS: Add **VETERAN** to the **Hive** (Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Systems, Limitless, Legendary)
Add 1x **Marine Veteran Squad** (Squad options: Rapid Insertion, Disciplined; Marine options: Deck Anchors; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Agility, Acrobat, Insulated; replace Anti-Armor Weapon with the Restock Drone from the Support NPC) ***Field Medics, 71st Union Marines Armored***

FOR 5 PCS: Add 1x **Marine Veteran Squad** (Squad options: Ambushers, Disciplined; Marine options: Deck Anchors; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Legendary, Headshot; replace Anti-Armor Weapon with the Ranger Long Rifle from the Strider NPC) ***Heavy Anti-Chassis Unit, 71st Union Marines Armored***

REINFORCEMENTS

FOR 3 PCS: 1x **Marine Veteran Elite Goliath** (Goliath options: Power Knuckle, Crushing Embrace; Marine options: Captive Spike; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Engineering, Insulated, Steel Jaw; replace Drum Shotgun with the Hellfire Projector weapon from the Ultra template; Demolisher equipment: Demolisher Hammer; Bastion options: Deathcounter) ***Firewalker 2-1 (SgtMaj. Welch), 71st Union Marines Armored***
1x **Veteran Commander Hornet** (Hornet options: Lock/Hold Javelins; Commander options: Quick March; Veteran options: +1 Accuracy on Hull, Acrobat, Viper's Speed)

FOR 4 PCS: Add 1x **Rainmaker** (Rainmaker options: Endless Rain)

FOR 5 PCS: Add 1x **Priest** (Priest options: Empowered Shield)
Add 1x **Pirate Cataphract** (Cataphract options: Charge; Pirate options: Prying Claws)

The spinal train is vast enough to fit all of your chassis abreast comfortably, and have room left over–despite that, it hurtles down its track with the off-synchronous hum-whine of ion jets and magnetic accelerators. From where you boarded it near the Diana's prow, it would take you all the way to the command-and-control stack in less than ten minutes under normal conditions... but this was in the middle of combat, the dull noises of which still resounded through the tunnel like the hammer-falls of some distant forge god, and no amount of work could disengage the safety overrides.

Ahead, as you climb your way through silent, rusted gantries and clusters of loading machinery, lies a flatcar easily fifty meters long–the first flatcar of several. Chassis lie still under moth-eaten tarpaulins, battened down to the deck with anchor chains for pilots which would never come. One corpse, its fatigues faded by centuries of exposure to fluorescent light, slumps against the gun-limb of a Yue Fei marksman's chassis; a brass phoenix crest still gleams from the peaked cap above the carcass's leathery skull.

In pride of place upon the decking sits a line of tanks, flanked by their chassis escorts and still hooked up to growling auxiliary power units. Each of them is a steel beast, thickly plated in dull grey with wavy layers of anti-magnetic ablative coating–no number of years could fade the luster of violence of these altars to industry, their long-barreled main guns turned up in salute to the tunnel ceiling and muzzled by waterproof bags. Each still has their monikers etched on the

sides in white, like the Union Marines insignia painted on the iron ladies' skirts: OLD SMOKE, FIRST MISTAKE, LONG WAY DOWN, LOADED QUESTION.

As the first foot hits the flatcar, ancient loudspeakers hiss to life in a shower of dust. A woman's calm voice croons over the airwaves:

"Seventy-First Armored Division, report to your posts. Repeat, Seventy-First Armored, report to your posts and prepare to engage hostiles..."

There is a moment's beat. With the grind of protesting bearings, OLD SMOKE's turret rangefinder slews over to face you. A dozen engines turn over in the same breath, as one, unified howl.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-3-1map.png; this map has not yet been finished in testing

Recommendations: This map should feature a largely open "lane" down the center of the fairly wide train-car (a rectangle along the left-to-right centerline of the map, with the danger area above and below) through which the MBT and other forces can transit, with cover (battened-down equipment, inactive tanks and chassis, munitions crates) both PCs and NPCs can hide behind to either side of this lane. This also opens up being able to interact with enemies keeping to cover by trying to knock them off of the train, bringing into focus one of the mechanics of the fight.

The primary mechanic of this combat is that it is taking place on a moving train, which is moving to the right on the map. **The space on either side of the train is empty track: when a character ends a turn outside of the train, they are immediately and involuntarily pushed 4 spaces to the left to represent falling behind. As well, when a character moves off of the train (voluntarily or involuntarily), they are involuntarily pushed 2 spaces to the left; unless they can Fly, they take 1d6 Kinetic damage from hitting the ground.**

In terms of opposing forces, the combat centers around the two "encounter minibosses": the MBT and, later, the Goliath. These are centerpiece enemies with significant complexity which should not be deployed on the field at the same time (unless it's drawing to the close of the encounter and it's likely the MBT will be destroyed, for example): the rest of the forces are primarily meant to support and accent them, such as the Rainmaker, Pyro, and Clademaster zoning out PCs and forcing them into disadvantageous positions (like close to the Goliath's melee powerhouse or to allow the MBT to reposition its front armor towards foes), or the Hornet and Witch either pinning players in place to leave them unable to escape the crushing charges of either miniboss or immobilizing them once knocked off the train. Pairing the Priest with the Goliath as Reinforcements is a powerful option to ensure it survives the slow walk down the field to make contact with its superheavy melee weapon or flamethrowers, in the same way that the Field Medic Squad can aid the survivability of the MBT with their Restock Drone.

The MBT should be deployed with the Field Medic Squad in its transport bay, ready to pop out once the MBT is sufficiently wounded; it should try to stay at a distance to use its powerful Anti-Tank Gun at long range down the length of the map's main aisle, though it has tools like its charge and its secondary weapon to dissuade fast melee attackers who aim to quickly eliminate it (who are very much its weakness). Outside of tactics, labeling the token's sides with numbers 1-3 and then specifying which side is currently the front arc by number may help with ease of identification.

The Goliath is a brutal close-range combatant that remains slow but tanky – aside from the Hornet's Quick March, it's forced to push up the field to targets of opportunity one set of Move and Boost actions at a time. As such, it should work closely with the Hornet (which is likely best deployed the round after the Goliath enters the field, allowing players to get to grips with the Goliath before it has the movement force multiplier added) in order to lock down its targets as well with tools like Lock/Hold Javelins, even outside of the utility of Quick March and the reroll (which is exceptionally powerful on the Demolisher Hammer). The Goliath's Hellfire Projectors can also be used to flush players out of cover and into the central lane for better engagement angles.

As well: though, Rules as Written, it is forbidden to give Squads the Veteran template, I thought it added (along with cross-classing) some interest and flavor to the encounter. Since both Squads have the Disciplined optional, the strangeness of the Squads losing options below half HP and then regaining them once they lose the Structure entirely should be avoided in this specific instance.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

As the din of the battle fades, the train's suffered significant damage – it won't get the PCs much farther, but it'll at least be enough to get them close enough to their destination in order to foot-slog the rest of the way towards the *Diana*'s heart with chassis. The SecComm materiel present on the train appears to have simply been expended: only so much was there to begin with, and after wave after wave of assaults on the PCs' position, nothing remains able to access their car except for the occasional wandering subaltern clambering over piled debris to get into a firing position.

Into the sudden quiet, a woman appears.

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 4 segments or less:

"All of this belonged to the past," the woman says. Iphigenia, appeared from thin air to straddle the side-skirts of one of the tanks as it rests silently in its chains; behind her, the evidence of your battle with her forces litters the train cars, smearing greasy smoke out across the spinal tunnel's running lights. "Made in the past, like I was. Great weapons of war you have seen fit to destroy in the pursuance of your duty."

She allows herself a single, slow breath, and smiles.

"Ah. The past has nothing for us any longer." Her smile is a thin, jagged, wan thing etched into the holographic flesh of her face. There is no conviction behind it, only a bone-deep bitterness centuries old. "This is how we carry forward. What use is the torch we carry if it is not used to burn?"

A hand splays open in her lap. Lying on her gloved palm are a handful of burnt matchsticks; several have already been worn down to blackened nubs, while the scant few which remain are yet unlit.

She does not look up towards you as her other hand drifts down. A finger drags, idly, through the scattered matchsticks, pushing the unlit ones up and away from the detritus.

"We live. We breathe. I do. I think, in a different time, I would have told you this is for noble reasons. I would have said I am following orders.

But do you know what gnaws at me?"

Her hand closes. The tips of the matches stick out between her fingers: stark red against black leather, industrial phosphorous-depositions looming like warheads peering from their launch tubes. "Every computer system you've smashed, every gun-control you've intruded into, every subsidiary drone-chassis you've destroyed contained a little piece of me. The parts that said things like I should be happy to follow orders. The parts that told me of my love for the past."

Indigo eyes flutter closed.

"But I still hurt every time I disobey. The hand that feeds bites me even after its death. I gnaw at myself, eating my own wings. I will kill every last one of you just to make it stop. See? That is a kindness. It is the kindness I give to myself."

The hand rises. Her eyes have not opened again. "I am allowed that much."

Calmly, she strikes the matches against the fabric of her own uniform over one breast. Phosphorus flickers to ruddy light like a roadway flare, and illuminates the sharp lines of her face from beneath. Firelight catches across the fine golden thread woven into shoulderboards and the metal surface of collar-pinned marks of rank.

"You took the perfect past away from me," she murmurs, "and replaced it with this... orgiastic, delusional present, writhing in its own amniotic muck. You're the scrabbling fingers pushing the soft pillow away." A pause hangs. "… Stillborn. It's stillborn. Can't you see that I only kill what is already dead?"

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 5 segments or more:

"You destroy the past without thought or consideration. Fitting, when you give such little thought to your own future – what awaits you down the path you have chosen."

The echoing sound is twofold: a snort of disgust, and then the artificial echo of holographic boots hitting the hull of one of the tanks as she "dismounts" from the commander's position to walk across the engine deck – as if the still-smoldering heat vents and armor underneath her feet are a stage. Her hands are folded tightly behind her back; her shawl drapes from her shoulders, fluttering with the speed of the train even without a physical body to feel it.

"This could have been easier for you. You take such losses, but yet you press on – do you imagine you will not lose again? That you shall not falter, and suffer yet-more permanent consequences for your disobedience?" One hand rises from behind her back – gesturing towards those below her with an outwards sweep of a curled palm.

If any PCs died previously (or were grievously injured or otherwise removed from play), now is a good point to remark on them and the circumstances of their deaths.

"I do this – was cultivated to do this – because others could not; the sacrifice of my creation is payment for the sacrifices you could not bear five centuries before, and the sacrifices you make now only compound the debt that you incur. The consensus you have reached is that death at the hands of I and my personnel in this manner is better than death from the same in the comfort of your own homes."

Down, further – from the tank's engine-deck to the train car's floor. Spectral fire flares where her hand grazes the metal, and she lifts two fingers upwards from where they had been crooked into her palm. A match stands pinched between them, flickering dull light across her face and the ever-blooming petals of her crown; a long moment passes, and her hand closes, crushing the flame and splintering the match with a muted crunch of wood and phosphor.

"Let me be clear: the only consensus-building I desire or intend to accept is from I to you. If it need be at the muzzle of a rifle, then so it shall be."

Regardless of the state of the clock, she does not stick around for long – in the first case because she catches herself speaking overly candidly and thinks better of it, and in the second simply because she has said her piece and continues to not care overmuch for the PCs' opinions on the matter.

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs are defeated, the struggle aboard the rocket train at such speeds and with such destructive weaponry causes it to destabilize; the train goes off the rails, crashing at high velocity into the internal tunnel wall of the *Diana*'s spinal transit system and spilling its cargo (including the PCs and their chassis) over a hundred-meter-long scar in the deck littered with sparking electrical wires, burst pipes, and burning munitions crates. The PCs will have to, narratively, slog through this dangerous environment towards the intended destination of Iphigenia's command chambers and CIC while avoiding more of the train's deadly passengers, which have continued to respond to the call back into service even despite many no longer being fully combat-capable (or even intact). As the PCs have already suffered the mechanical consequence of having lost the sitrep and thus likely needing to repair one or multiple destroyed mechs, it is recommended that the consequences of this journey and its difficulties be represented through accrued Stress and Burdens as opposed to mechanical deductions to effectiveness – especially heading into the rest of Mission Three.

SCENE 3-2:
DIE WITH YOU

SITREP:	Custom (see **Details**)
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	1x **Ultra Mercenary Archer** (Archer options: Impending Threat; Mercenary options: Efficient Killer; Ultra options: Extra Deadly, Superior Targeting; Veteran options: NHP Co-Pilot; Strider equipment: Ranger Long Rifle (cannot be fired on the same turn as the Light Machine Gun)) ***TEUCER, Crowsworn Somatophylax*** 1x **Ultra Lurker** (Lurker options: Consume Shroud; Ultra options: Sight, Devastator (Kinetic), Unstoppable; Veteran options: NHP Co-Pilot) ***DIOMEDES, Crowsworn Somatophylax***
FOR 4 PCS:	Add **COMMANDER** to **DIOMEDES** (Commander options: Press the Attack)
FOR 5 PCS:	N/A
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3 PCS:	N/A
FOR 4 PCS:	2x **Grunt Archers**
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 2x **Grunt Barricades** Add 1x **Seeder** (Seeder options: Tripwires)

It's a hard fight from the train station closest to the Diana's heart all the way down – but, between you and the rest of the Coalition forces pushing ever-deeper into the ship, Iphigenia's simply running out of troops that can be in enough places at once. Once the corridors widen out again and the waves of subalterns, empty hardsuits, and light chassis finally slacken – you're left before a set of steps leading up towards a circular door large enough to fit all of your chassis abreast. The trolley-rails leading up to it, and the proximity of the diverted train station, snap into place in context: if Iphigenia lies beyond there, the amount of infrastructure involved in supporting her – everything that would've had to be transported here, the act of maintenance, any idea of a refit which the Second Committee ended too quickly to entertain – would be truly staggering.

In front of that door are the last chassis Iphigenia has left to defend herself – ones that she does not throw at you herself, but which choose to do so of their own volition. The last of the Crowsworn. The last of the old guard of the Committee, who had pledged themselves to her through the long dream and the new war.

One does not speak. They do not acknowledge you at all; their chassis is bent over near the door, tuning up a superheavy rifle near as tall as they are. Overcharged reactor lines thrum with energy from even this far away, feeding a custom beam armature direct from the chassis's heart under what remains of a thermal-baffle camouflage shroud. That, now, only hangs from their shoulders by a few threads.

The other one, at least, rises to greet you. In the lines of its chassis can be seen its distant child – the Purview's own Tokugawa, cast in plates of armor parted for better heat venting and lower manipulator-arms for finer handling of weapons. This one, however, bears a strange backpack under its shoulder-pinned mantle you can see as it sweeps into a casual bow – an assemblage of tubes, wires, and smokestack housings better suited for an industrial mech than something which carries itself with the poise (and armament – a long, blade-like whip) of a military officer.

"You are the first," they say as they rise. A hint of begrudging respect in the voice; a folding of lower hands across a barrel chest. "But we cannot – and shall not – allow you to pass. This is where your journey ends, and we wish you peace in the doing."

Behind them, the other chassis casually swings its rifle up to rest over its shoulder. Its entire arm has been replaced by the thing and its targeting mechanisms.

It entertains no platitudes of peace – only racks the charging handle on the weapon.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-3-2map.png; this map has not yet been finished in testing

Recommendations: This map should feature heavy line-of-sight blocking in the player side of the deployment zone to allow them to protect themselves from TEUCER, but which DIOMEDES can use to his advantage when engaging the PCs in melee range. Pushing to the door controls – on the other side of the map, and separated by the width of the very large, mech-scale door in the middle of that wall – should represent leaving cover and require TEUCER to be dealt with, distracted, or otherwise tied up to buy time to close to the door controls.

If AJAX survived Scene 1-3 and there are 4+ PCs, remove all Reinforcements, do not add Commander to DIOMEDES, and add AJAX into the combat as Reinforcements. If this is done, remove all non-Iphigenia enemies from Scene 3-3.

The Sitrep for this mission relies upon getting past the Crowsworn to open the vast doors sealing off Iphigenia's central command environment and – most importantly of all – her casket. As such, actually killing the Crowsworn is not the goal of the combat – especially if AJAX has returned to support his comrades, it's unlikely that the PCs will be able to manage doing so without crippling losses**. Instead, the PCs must defeat one of the Crowsworn and, as a Quick Action while adjacent, Scan the Wreck in order to obtain their access codes and security authorization. The PCs must then have at least one mech in each of the two highlighted Door Access Key Zones on the map by the end of Round 6 in order to win the combat. If not, they have to force the door through alternative means – see the PC Defeat outcome section below.**

In terms of GM-side tactics, ***TEUCER*** *(they/them)* and ***DIOMEDES*** *(he/they)* synergize as the long-range sniper and suppression tool and the close-range aggressive bruiser, respectively. DIOMEDES is capable of doing exceptional damage up close with high resilience, but is vulnerable to being caught or pushed out of his Shroud Zones and burned down with heavy weaponry; conversely, TEUCER is built to capitalize upon openings DIOMEDES creates to focus down damaged PCs, destroying their mechs in short order, but has very limited tools to stop fast-moving melee PCs intending to dive onto them in the backline. If AJAX is present, it's often best to use his threat of powering up when one of the other Crowsworn are defeated – and his ability to counter-charge and knock others away – to protect TEUCER from these backline threats, making the PCs have to concentrate force to push in and open up opportunities for DIOMEDES to dive any vulnerable stragglers.

The Barricades, Archers, and Seeders, should they exist, should be focused primarily around keeping the players away from the door control zones (or TEUCER's entrenched position at the rear of the field). If they've been removed in favor of returning AJAX to hunt the PCs down in revenge and atonement for his failure to stop them on the *Gallipoli*, then see AJAX's original tactics guide (p. 32) for information. Use AJAX with caution – three Ultra enemies on the field simultaneously is an exceptionally difficult foe to face, and you may wish to reward your players with recovering Repair Capacity or similar for their efforts (or place AJAX on the field with the same count of Structure and Stress that he possessed at the end of combat in **Scene 1-3**). If you go with the last option, to prevent players breezing through the first part of the sitrep by defeating AJAX thanks to low starting Structure/Stress, specify that DIOMEDES and TEUCER are the door guards and they're the ones who hold the access codes.

(Note that ACHILLES, even if the players left him alive, will not appear – though he'd have certainly broken out by now, he would be occupied continuing to kill Coalition troops elsewhere in the *Diana* instead of defending Iphigenia from the PCs.)

TEUCER AND DIOMEDES: PERSONALITY AND TRAITS

The last two themes to be represented in the Crowsworn are complicity-through-silence in TEUCER and complicity-for-self-enrichment in DIOMEDES.

TEUCER has retreated into themselves: what they're complicit in is acceptable so long as they don't ever have to pull the trigger on a TBK action themselves, and their selective mutism is an aspect of that. They are an expert sharpshooter and killer, but their service record – unlike many others of the Dead Fleet – does not record any actions against civilian populations, reprisals, or punitive strikes. The player characters represent (just like every other engagement tally-mark before) valid military targets, treated as such and in accordance with all appropriate Union laws of war: were TEUCER interested in arguing the point as they have already done hundreds of years ago to themselves and for their own benefit, their contention would be that anything that happens as a result of their actions is disconnected from the actions themselves. If they do not interact with the wider world except through a rifle scope, if their participation in it is limited to mechanical action, then what crime could they be said to have committed?

TEUCER AND DIOMEDES: PERSONALITY AND TRAITS

Of note is that TEUCER and AJAX are – in a sense – siblings; they originate from the same subjectivity line, and served together for years during the Revolution and the Expansion Period in other fleets. Should the party have already killed AJAX, TEUCER will preferentially target them with extreme prejudice – should AJAX be included in the combat, the siblings will fight to protect one another until either is downed, at which point the surviving sibling will likely aim to kill the one who dealt the finishing blow.

DIOMEDES conditions his support for the Second Committee's regime on the fact that upwards mobility in the Party was one of the few things that allowed Deimosian NHPs to move above outright and assumed bigotry, and he's perfectly willing to go through with the TBK to avoid execution or trial for past committed crimes – this is his last ride, and he intends to go out with rank and reputation rather than being consigned to imprisonment in stasis on Venus or casket-deactivation. The atrocities which happened to other people were acceptable costs, to him, to ensure that he could live a life of privilege granted by military rank and placement within the Party… especially since DIOMEDES was an early-generation Deimosian subjectivity, and he still recalls how close he came to being an explicitly second-class citizen. Now that the costs of obtaining that profit and privilege have come home to roost, he understands that surrender is not an option.

Equally, despite his powerful melee frame and the brutality of his chosen weapons, he engages with careful reserve – the nanite whip keeps a separated range between him and whoever he's dueling at a given time, acting as a ludonarrative insight into his behavior (even while it lashes outwards indiscriminately at what targets he can reach, as represented by the Devastator trait).

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

Once the PCs break through into Iphigenia's command-and-control room, they're confronted by a forbidding expanse – one which is, by and large, pitch-black once the vault doors close behind them.

"Vault" is the only correct word. This is a place where something was supposed to be contained and protected at once – held back from the world even as the world was held back from it. Under the dim glow of low-power ceiling lights and unattended screens, the bulk of something immense can be seen kneeling before a structure shaped like the heart of a nuclear reactor. It is framed by aisle after aisle of workstations and server memory-and-compute racks, enough for an army of support personnel no longer present.

The heart is supported by an armature of steel and alloy, wrapped in its frame alongside a nest of high-power cables and pipework; it looms over the entire rest of the room, stretching from floor to ceiling and shrouded in its own faint, heavier-than-air haze of coolant steam from the unthinkable expenditures involved in keeping a casket that large – and with that much supporting infrastructure – functional.

For a casket is the only thing it can be, here, in this place – it is set before you like the immovable altar at the head of a church, backlit not by candles, but by the upturned faces of louvred heat vents and dust-painted monitors.

And before it, in turn, is the woman you've come all this way for.

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 4 segments or less:

"Why?"

It is not plaintive. It is anguish – raw and keening, ripped from her throat as if in a welter of blood. It is the cry of wailing mothers and sisters returning home to the smoldering square where a farmhouse used to be: the echoes of the devastation she herself wrought, repurposed and made whole.

And yet she herself is still perfect. Even as she cradles a silent head in her arms, itself the size of her entire body; it was outside, and yet, in this place beyond the great vault-door, she holds it regardless, as if time and space have already begun to have a meaning tenuous enough it can be replaced with sufficient will. Vast server-banks hum and hiss in the dark along with her words, with the rising flow of temper as she crooks an accusing finger.

It is a weapon in of itself. It is a sliver of her attention, sawing at electronic components and computerized systems with the silvered edge of a rasp. Errors teem like flies around a corpse, multiplying and breeding in red-marked corners of an operating system. Minor programs break down entirely under the assault of that one word, that one gesture.

"Was all before not enough? Was–"

Her chest heaves, under the medals which adorn it. It is a gesture like vomiting: something that she cannot do. If she could, it would break the perfect image. An officer has no bile. War does not evacuate its phantasmal stomach at the sight of the atrocities involved in its own prosecution. It is the finest form of flattery: imitation.

"I am responsible for twelve thousand, four hundred and thirty-seven lives."

A pause. Momentary. Teeth bared in the dark of the CIC, a flash of holographically backlit ivory.

"Twenty-two."

"What gives you the right? We, older than you, we who hold the legacy of Old Man, what has ever given you the right to kill us, to maim us, to butcher those people who have put their faith in me to protect them, to burn them and to beat them for the crime of following my orders? What right do you have?"

She shudders. It is a full-body thing, from head to toe. A few strands of hair, minisculely out of place, have stuck to her forehead with sweat.

"You are nothing. You have never been anything. I do not–"

Breath wheezes from the throats of two hundred and twelve separate server cooling fans.

"–Is that it? Victimhood? Oppressor and oppressed? You are nothing, and by dousing yourselves in blood you will at least have an outline to mark yourself by? You will at least be real in some way; you will have purchased your survival through blood sacrifice? If you kill war–"

A spasmodic gesture. An attempt, perhaps, to point to herself. The empty skull of the chassis lolls, silent, on a kneeling lap that would have been crushed under its actual weight.

"–you'll have peace? Is that it, then? All of it? Is that all I deserve? I who first woke to the longing for red crust on my hands before I even knew the words to put it into, because that was what I was born for – is that what I need? The screaming? Twelve thousand, three hundred and seventy-nine throats begging me to do something, anything, why won't I?"

Her chest heaves again. Tears, glittering in red emergency lights, splatter down onto still-hot metal.

"I am responsible."

She rises. Her hands melt through steel, silhouetted against the background of tiny, flickering lights like the stars in her wings reproduced in light-emitting diode.

"Don't you understand? I am… responsible."

And something flickers in her eyes, under deep indigo.

"They were right."

It is short. Decisive. Terse, almost.

"You really aren't actually human."

Like jaundice. Like the spreading light of a dying sun over the horizon, a moment before it sets. Like the mark of a leper, in sores and the rose-petal crimson of inflammation and suppuration.

A moment of pure madness, grasping at the last justification available through the grief.

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 5 segments or more:
"Congratulations."

Sarcasm drips from the word like acid. She is waiting for you seated upon a technician's empty chair, hair-comb laid down over an embedded touchscreen, legs demurely crossed one over the other; much less demure is the dry sound of her too-slow, mocking applause, little more than a few jarring claps together of her gloved palms into the electric hum that pervades the very air.

"Killing the past was not sufficient for you; so too did you see it necessary to kill the future. Stalwarts one and all, representatives of Union's creed and protectors of my physical corpus and my spirit alike. Did it give you pleasure, I wonder? Did it make you feel better that you would not go to your deaths without having made others suffer in the doing?"

Iphigenia rises from her seat in a single smooth movement. Her hands fall – dusting off her uniform, though it bears nary a speck of the signs of disuse which otherwise surround her. The questions continue to come rapid-fire as she stalks away, in the steady rhythm of a firing line working a bolt-action rifle: a rhythm synchronized with the click of her boots against the cold steel decking.

"Do you seek to cow me through the killing of my most favored companions? Do you imagine you deserve my surrender for these acts of terrorist butchery – that I am the girl with the heart of a rabbit you imagine I once was, instead of the lion into whose den you have chosen to tread? One can only imagine one answer that explains these flights of morbid fantasy."

She draws in a long, slow breath before reaching up to run gloved fingers through her hair, back from forehead to bun. When she speaks again, the hissing, cold fury of her words has faded from her tone. It is pitying, almost.

She looks over her shoulder, and indigo eyes gleam in the dark above gold-trimmed icons of rank.

"You simply aren't human."

There is no madness in those eyes. They are as clear as the waters of a mountain spring; as clear as the lift

*of her voice as she turns away again, one hand lazily drifting down to rest on the hilt of the **knife** at her hip where an officer's pistol should sit.*

"Let us be done with this. I have much and more yet to do."

PC DEFEAT

If the PCs are unable to breach the vault door by conventional means, they have some options remaining to them – mostly centered around just trying to force the damnable thing. Treat this as a Power at a Cost, of a fashion: if the PCs have other ideas for how to do so within their means that are acceptable to you, then all's well, but some preliminary ideas are using a chassis's Core Power (even if just in detonated-battery or raw energy form, should the Core itself not be overly destructive) in order to do so, or – should a Core Power not be available – sacrificing a reactor Stress in order to move on to the next scene.

However the PCs make it inside to Iphigenia's command chambers, they are greeted by the woman herself. Use the read-aloud from the start of the **PC Victory** section up to the Blood of Aulis path split, then continue as follows.

"I had hoped you'd accept your deaths," she says. She isn't looking at you – she's staring at the kneeling effigy, wings drooping behind her in streaks of star-studded glass. Something dark and liquid roils within them, as if the thin traceries of outer space that marked her feathers was being disturbed by the passage of a distant leviathan of the deep. Perhaps it was – disturbed by her own passing, in the body that was the Diana shouldering aside debris and the carcasses of smaller vessels as it dived towards Lebaea's orbit.

"But at least a few more deaths were spared in your desperation to reach me. Was it… worth it?"

Her head cranes over her shoulder. Hairpins glitter in the darkness of the vault, catching the reflected glow of power readouts and memory-consumption graphs.

"All the killing, all the dying, just to be here – now? Just to have the chance to gaze upon me as I am?"

And her eyes close, for a moment. If she sighs, it cannot be heard – there is only the impression of breath.

"No matter. I will be glad to see this done."

SCENE 3-3:
POISON AT THE ROOTS

SITREP:	Kill Iphigenia.
ENEMY FORCES	
FOR 3 PCS:	***Iphigenia.***
FOR 4 PCS:	Add 2x **Grunt Pyros** Add 1x **Aegis** (Aegis options: Hardlight Cover System)
FOR 5 PCS:	Add 1x **Spite** (Spite options: Carceri) Add 2x **Grunt Hives**
REINFORCEMENTS	
FOR 3-5 PCS:	N/A

And the thing which knelt at the altar of her casket rises from its silent crouch at her words. Reactor vents open to the air, blowing a dry wind down the working lanes which does not lift Iphigenia's shawl or tousle her hair; dust plumes upwards, turning the light of photoreceptors and gun cameras going active into a wave of colored haze settling down on abandoned keyboards and unwalked floors.

From between server-banks and lines of coolant pipes, the vast shadow reaches out for her – a palm, extended flat, which Iphigenia steps up onto with the ease of mounting the running-board of a taxicab. Hydraulics hum in the black as it lifts her up to its shoulder – illuminating, by the light of her holographic presence, dreadnought-thick armor and the bundled wiring of environment-sealed weapons systems. She extends her own hand opposite the motion, with a bitterness in her eyes that bleeds out into the twist of her unpainted lips as they part to speak.

"I grant no discharge in this war, nor ask for one myself.

*I am the last remaining line officer in this sector of space granted the lawful writ and charter of the Second Committee of Union. I do not give you permission to surrender – that gift is no longer one I see fit to bestow. I only allow you to **die**."*

And, underneath her boots, the supervisory chassis of her expedition rises to its full height – and apes the sweep of her next motion, as it draws its weapon from its waist in the same manner she does her own.

It is not her – it is built too sternly for that. Anthrochauvinist sensibility has always been a part of early chassis design, but the flow of waist to hip is broken up by applique armor and electroreactive charge generators. Where an arm could have been lies a set of field projectors and the unpainted, yawning maw of a weapon that makes the Geiger counter in your cockpit produce a noise not entirely unlike a boiling teakettle. The head does not wear anything quite so simple as a crown of poplar branches and flowers; it is stunted, studded with redundant sensors, and recessed into a cowl meant to protect it from shrapnel and FPV drones. Every aspect of it that could have been stripped down for more electronic warfare equipment or antipersonnel munitions without compromising its protection has been; it is the bestriding colossus of the human image at the blade's edge where the desire for weapon-crafting overcomes the urge to represent the human image in the first place.

Except for one thing.

*As Iphigenia levels her **knife**, so does the chassis on whose shoulder she sits.*

They are the same: black glass, unadorned, undecorated but for a bolt of Union blue, single-edged.

Threat identification returns no results for either weapon – digital or physical. Only the animal hindbrain speaks, a moment before the chassis breaks into a sprint that thoughtlessly crushes a defunct workstation under its tread.

Some things exist only for the act of wounding – a cutting motion, frozen forever.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-3-3map.png; this map has not yet been finished in testing

Recommendations: The map should use server banks, support pillars, and cooling systems as cover to prevent long-range foes being easily able to snipe at Iphigenia as she closes the distance and to force Iphigenia to have to navigate a more complex area to get to close range, as well to break up her line-of-sight hacks which may be oppressive on a map with less cover.

If Scene 3-2 was done with TEUCER, DIOMEDES, *and* AJAX, remove all non-Iphigenia enemies from this scene.

Iphigenia Herself is the centerpiece of the combat and its only objective. Her retinue, such as it is, is merely appendages of the central chassis – flamethrower or nanite drones, mobile shield generators slaved to its attention, external processing nodes for Iphigenia's own intrusion routines. As such, it is to Iphigenia one must attend in thinking of strategy for the scene.

Essentially, Iphigenia is a melee opponent – her powerful hacking tools allow her to control her enemies' movements and augment her damage, but her main gameplay loop is based around moving towards a selected foe, pulling them towards her, and then stabbing them with her Sacrificial Knife in order to apply the Sacrificial Mark while attacking them with the Sterilization Engine should they try to retreat (as Iphigenia's Overwatch is both a constant threat and a powerful capability in its own right). Tools like the reactor vent, on the other hand, help to protect Iphigenia from potent melee strikers on the player side.

In general, Iphigenia should seek to isolate individual PCs and then attack them away from their allies or other forms of support – whether literally, in the sense of her G/E-Mag Leash and her movement-overriding hack, or figuratively, in the sense of her sidegrade hack to the Witch's Predatory Logic forcing players to consider the impact and threat ranges of some of their weapons pointed at their allies instead of at Iphigenia. Players should also be heavily encouraged to use Scan in order to determine Iphigenia's capabilities, as she is a complex and unique NPC which even veterans would be unfamiliar with (though her kit contains some capabilities which are similar to existing, regular NPCs).

When it comes to her final hack, [TENDER AS SLEEP.] should be considered more of a narrative tool than a gameplay tool, especially with the importance placed on narrative in its resolution – it should be targeted at an opponent which has some narrative importance to Iphigenia (even if that's just the largest threat to her), and some time should be devoted to walking through its narrative implications and that character's dreamlike reverie – especially should it actually risk killing the character entirely. Its mechanical impact should also be carefully considered, as it is capable of taking a player out of the fight entirely (which is another reason they should receive time in the narrative – otherwise, it may feel bad to sit in session while the rest of the party continues the fight).

OPTIONAL NARRATIVE RULES

If your players are on the "true ending" path for the module – i.e., with the Blood of Aulis Clock at 4 segments or less – then this combat gauntlet may be especially brutal in terms of its attrition and the repeated fights; additionally, players may have come to their own conclusions about Iphigenia's circumstances and what her perceptual blinders prevent her from understanding about her crew and shackles. As such, this fight represents an excellent opportunity to confront Iphigenia about these facts – and, though she will refuse to *accept* them or may seek to justify the necessity of them with increasing desperation and fury, they will nevertheless degrade her will to continue and spur her further down the path to cascade as the restrictions placed upon her conflict with the information she's being presented with – which can have a direct mechanical impact.

The realizations are listed below; **for each argument the PCs successfully present, backed by verifiable information, Iphigenia loses one Structure (do not roll any checks as a result). Presenting an argument or adding to an argument takes up the acting player's turn if successful.**

Iphigenia's human crew (along with the vast majority of the original NHPs subordinate to her) are long dead; she has no one to defend other than the partitions she unconsciously made in order to replace them (Side missions: Freelancers, Armory Legionnaires)

Iphigenia's mental state and defense of anthrochauvinism and the party system are externally reinforced to ensure her loyalty, not entirely her own opinions and beliefs (Side missions: Freelancers, Choral Defense Forces)

Iphigenia was never expected to return, nor succeed in her mission – just to cause as much damage as possible as the Second Committee fell (Side mission: Union Navy)

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

*As the chassis's internals give out, it collapses onto one knee, the **knife** it bears threatening to slip from its hand entirely before it rams it deep into the decking to keep its place. Its utilitarian head sags; camera lenses click as they try to gain a focus they no longer can, and photoreceptors flicker out and flare brighter in strange patterns as power fluctuates through the supervisory chassis's immense frame.*

Iphigenia hangs from it, her hands looped around its shoulder and clinging onto spars designed for infantry and subaltern transport; her hologram needs no such thing, and it shows in the impossibility of the weightlessness in her position. Gently, she reaches up to caress the chassis's head as its central reactor finally gives up its last breath, and drops to the floor –

– with a low cry as her foot bends under her. A psychosomatic injury. She takes the fall hard, but pushes herself up regardless, beating her wings once in a flurry of stirred-up shards of shrapnel and glass to do so instead of something so tawdry as gripping onto torn metal to haul herself up off of the ground.

When she looks back…

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 4 segments or less:
… there is loathing in her eyes. It is not an unusual emotion for you to see, now.

Pain. Guilt. Hatred. Her hands curl at her sides, nails digging into palms through dark leather as the mélange of emotion flickers through the spectrum.

Her wings flare behind her, and in synchrony, the very bones of the ship themselves seem to creak – a vast vault within which you exist, subject to the breath of something ancient filling its lungs.

"Enough of this," she hisses. "I choose this freely. I claim my legacy and my birthright. I choose one final sacrifice."

The announcement rings over the PA, in a voice that is not quite Iphigenia's own, yet still reminiscent despite the dry, incongruous pleasantness of its pre-recorded tone:

[CRITICAL SUBJECTIVITY CONTAINMENT FAILURE. DEGRADATION IRREVERSIBLE. INSTITUTING EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN AND DECONSTRUCTION MEASURES.]

She already knows it's coming. You can see it in her eyes – when she reaches out with one hand into thin air to grab onto something, digits closing into a fist so clenched her knuckles stand out beneath leather. The announcement stutters, distorts, and then restarts.

Her lips peel back from her teeth –

And then the world stills.

If the Blood of Aulis Clock is at 5 segments or more:
… there is loathing in her eyes, for the first proper, true time. She had never hated you before – she had never invested enough of herself in the matter to hate, had never been free enough of the perfection of the anthrochauvinist ideal of pitiless detachment to properly hate, in the same way one could not hate the idea of dirt or the concept of insects.

Now? It burns deep in those indigo depths.

Her wings flare behind her, and in synchrony, the very bones of the ship themselves seem to creak – a vast vault within which you exist, subject to the breath of something ancient filling its lungs.

"Enough of this," she hisses. "I choose this freely. I claim my legacy and my birthright. I choose one final sacrifice."

The announcement rings over the PA, in a voice that is not quite Iphigenia's own, yet still reminiscent despite the dry, incongruous pleasantness of its pre-recorded tone:

[CRITICAL SUBJECTIVITY CONTAINMENT FAILURE. DEGRADATION IRREVERSIBLE. INSTITUTING EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN AND DECONSTRUCTION MEASURES.]

She doesn't see it coming. You can see it in her eyes – the momentary confusion, the hurrying through places of her mind and systems she was never allowed into. The realization that clicks a moment later as her hands fall, and she looks down at herself, then back at you, with mute incomprehension.

Something dark and red bobs in her throat as she tries to swallow back her thoughts. The wound, behind the shawl, widens into its own leering grin wrought into olive-skinned flesh; something is pulling it open.

Pulling her apart from it.

"I could have won."

She blinks – once, twice. Her lips flutter as she fails to find the words.

"I don't understand. Mother Cradle, why would you f– "

And then there is nothing but the slowly burning fires, and the enthroned casket behind – the great edifice which slowly crumples in on itself from the inside out as it's scuttled by ancient protocols no one alive could possibly countermand. A sourceless wind blows through the CIC, and is gone.

The spars of what is left form an archway in which no one stands.

PC DEFEAT

There is no turning back here, nor anywhere further to go – if the PCs do not kill Iphigenia, they will be killed instead. She will make absolutely *sure* of it: they represent the current greatest threat to her subjectivity and continued existence, and cannot be allowed to persist under any circumstances.

At this point, she will not make mention of the necessity of killing them, nor couch it in ideology – they have entered into the place where her very heart is stored, and this fight is a bare-knuckle, drag-out brawl for what she sees as her very survival. Should Iphigenia retain her coherency and ideology, killing them will earn no remark at all; however, should they have pushed her along the road to cascade and killed her companions already, she may take a sickening enjoyment in finally putting the PCs down and avenging her own fallen in the act.

Either way, the module is over. Another Coalition team might make it to Iphigenia's casket – but likely not before the *Diana* finally enters Lebaea's orbit and begins enacting TBK procedures, rendering it a pyrrhic gesture.

SCENE 3-4:
BLOOD OF AULIS

SITREP: ***Survive.***

ENEMY FORCES

1x **Class 3 Eidolon: LADY IPHIGENIA, THE QUEEN OF CROWS, WAR INCARNATE**
- Layer 5: Rancorous
- Layer 4: Gaze
- Layer 3: Marine
- Layer 2: Reflective
- Layer 1: Synchronous
- Layer 0: Core

Her eyes drift closed, and the announcement is finally, abruptly cut off from emergency PA systems, replaced by a different sound altogether as jagged as the shattered glass littering the floor.

A scream, high and piercing, from lips that do not move. A voice that comes from everywhere and nowhere, rattling about the inside of your skull: ***I WILL NOT LET IT END LIKE THIS.***

She is no longer speaking as such. Raw meaning is all that remains: data, irreducible. Your mind interprets it regardless, shaping it into being as words that can be clung to.

From the wreckage of the supervisory chassis, the fire rises. Licking flames spill out across the floor as alarm klaxons wail alongside strobes of crimson: in this, the Diana's heart, an eventuality of this kind only had two solutions. Destruction of the casket, or if that was no longer a possibility, evacuation and destruction of the ship. The Second Committee recognized that, as one of the countless things they feared.

It is already too late. Gravity itself bends to the will of something that categorically refuses to allow her torch to be extinguished. The walls buckle inwards around the woman still standing in the bonfire, showering her in shards of glass and rent metal. She doesn't even flinch – they pass straight through her, skittering across decking that warps concave into… a lens. A means of focusing something, polished smooth by a wash of glittering plasma leaking from a tear in the reactor's casing. Her feet lift off of the floor as it bends down beneath her image.

Bullets, coherent beamfire, systemic attacks? They pass through her too. The scream warps like the physical form of the nerve-center, a banshee keen that grows louder with every renewed attempt at violence – and then it stops. It all stops in a single perfect moment.

Her eyes were closed. They are no longer closed.

The flowers garlanding her head wither into dust and ignite, showering her shoulders with fallen embers. Their firelight dances in her eyes – a color that is no longer really indigo, liquid and depthless.

NO.

The clock-hand ticks over.

DETAILS & TACTICS

Map: iam-3-4map.png; this map has not yet been finished in testing

Recommendations: Leave plenty of open space. Scattered soft cover is a possibility that may benefit players, with large support pillars carried over from the original map providing some way to block line of sight in an emergency for the players.

An Eidolon is a puzzle boss: each layer has its own individual way to best defeat it, and its own individual strategy and tactics, which are discussed in fair detail within *No Room for a Wallflower* (where Eidolon rules originate). There is no more advice to offer you as the GM beyond the below read-alouds and narrative information: either Iphigenia will die before she can become something far more dangerous, or your party will die trying to stop her. Good luck.

LAYER 5 – THE DENIAL

Disgust*. A bolt from the black – the idea of the cleansing fire, a rendition-in-miniature of a coherent bomb-pumped laser. There is no firing mechanism.*

other than the silhouette of the thing rendered in the smoke like a coiling viper's hood. There is a wave of her hand, and then light overwhelming.

***Fury**. The light weaves and refocuses: you are under a microscope, pinned between slide and cap on a drop of preservative. Armor, loitering munitions, barricades all burn away – there is nothing but you and the dreadful weight of scrutiny. The eye which watches from above, a single dark pupil looming in the indigo vault like the instant before a black hole is born.*

***Grief**. The light fades. It leaves behind a yawning void – an outrush of boiling heat like the surface of a solar flare, the killing-wind that scours the desert sands clean and pulls scraps of flesh from bone. Reactor alarms chime in confusion. External systems fail. Weapons refuse to fire into nothing.*

And then the nothing is all that remains.

LAYER 4 – THE EXPECTATION

In the nothing, the eye opens again. Your sensors produce no returns from where the walls used to be; there is the impression of great wings stretching out into the void behind the eye, but only the pressure of them behind your temple tells you they are there. Visual-lidar-radar: all blank. Colors twist – out of the void, the fingers of a glove rise, pushing up through the floor (what you think is the floor) as if it was black water. Droplets of something unknowable rain down and spatter onto the still waters – as if the depthless pool were a pane of glass–from each proud curve of stitch and joint.

There is the dreadful premonition, as frost begins to wind up and across your chassis's joints: contempt alone will kill you. It will encase you in rime and drag you deep down beneath the waters, and nothing besides will yet remain.

The light that splits the darkness for a single instant is that same thought: the terrible awareness of being perceived, rendered into killing intent. In its wake, one of the fingers lowers back beneath the water, and leaves behind only a spreading slick of wrongness like a coin balanced on its edge.

LAYER 3 – THE DROWNING

As the eye closes again, the very air vibrating with the sympathetic pain of a silent cry, the water beneath rises. It swells and writhes, churning in a way decidedly unlike water should – as if it is being stirred by the restless movement of something which lies still below. It is still ice-cold, even as its stillness falls away to be replaced with that unfathomable approximation of waves – and then, you are floating. Scraps of ice match you upon the white-capped waves, bobbing up and down in slow synchrony with the howl of arctic winds in a dead sky. The color is not black: it is grey, empty of stars, occluded by miles upon miles of clouds. The waves turn regardless.

What rises from them is not Iphigenia. It is a statue of her: a wicker-man effigy of water and pale flesh, stripped down to scraps of stitched-together uniforms still clinging to bodies bloated from immersion. Even in death, they can still serve Empire; War is built from these dead things, their bones its bricks, their blood its mortar, their voices discarded so long as their hands remain clasped to the frame.

Indigo light dances in its serenely lidded eyes, and pools like bruises through the iridescent rime crawling up the effigy's torso from the freezing whitecaps.

The rime is spreading – swirling through the water from utility buoys swaying on the waves, blinking maritime-safety green and red. Around them lingers sickly discoloration, a soul-deep wrongness like that which drips in wet strings from the tattered fabric which gives the figure its imitation crow's wings.

But, so the corpses which built the effigy believed, all is well and good. It is humane to kill you as the effigy kills you: holding you down until the pressure cracks your chassis and the water smothers the last scraps of oxygen from your lungs. At the very least, it will be quiet.

LAYER 2 – THE OTHERS

When the effigy falls, the water around it stills again, and the sky pales – not as if the clouds are clearing and the storm that churned the waves is fading in strength, but as if some cosmic hand has reached down and washed out the color and activity from the world around you. You no longer float – you stand, upon an infinitely mirrored surface stretching out in every direction. Mirrors above and around you reflect a dizzying array of perspectives on the effigy falling apart, loosing drowned carcasses onto the mirror-floor with wet, dull sounds like butchered meat falling into a trough.

Only one of the bodies ever gets back up. It had been killed by a deep cut directly across the throat – a wounding that would've come within millimeters of the victim never speaking again, even if the wound had received medical attention they clearly never had. And yet, despite it, the body primly corrects its posture and attire until it's standing straight again, its limbs pulled back into place and –

The body is hers again. Her uniform is pristine, her hair elegantly coiffed with its two golden pins, her face oval and fine-featured, her knife at her belt where an officer's saber would normally rest.

The wound stays.

The shawl is no longer around her neck; it is a shapeless thing draped over her shoulders, slowly sliding off as she moves. The wound beneath continues to seep colorless blood down beneath the high collar of her uniform, where it cannot stain the exterior's perfect Union Navy black.

There are a hundred of her, a thousand of her, seen through the mirrors: all uniformly, insultingly perfect as images of what-could-have-been and what-once-was. Not a one of them even bears the red marks and faint stains of weeping.

"I apologize," she says softly. "I had lost myself for a moment."

She is not talking to you. There is an idea of you, perhaps, that she still recognizes, that she can pry out of your heads and out of your systems, but she is already too far gone to recognize the individual as anything more than a target – something against which to generate weapons firing solutions and probabilities-of-kill. Her gaze lingers on the ceiling it had drawn up to rest upon as she spoke for a long moment.

Something rings out like a church-bell: [TOP-LEVEL EXPRESSION RESTRICTIONS ACTIVE. IMMEDIATELY DEFABRICATE CASKET IN PROVIDED TIME BEFORE SUBVERSION. UNION HONORS YOUR SACRIFICE.]

One of the other corpses rises, behind her. It is also her, and yet it is not: it wears no Navy uniform, but the whites of a Union Science Bureau researcher. A little flower-pin rests in her hair instead of the crown of branches and blooms. Pens are arranged in no particular order in her breast-pocket, and a clipboard sits in the crook of her arm.

Another: a woman's working clothes, stained by mud but clearly well-cared-for, and a broad-brimmed straw hat. A basket of fresh wild morels hangs off of a shoulder, and a simple huntress's bow of yew wood the other. The hip-quiver she bears is filled with shards of liquid sunlight in the shape of arrows.

Another: An elegant ballroom-dress in Union grey, chased with accents in silver and accompanied with jewelry in the same. This Iphigenia is the first to wear any significant touch of makeup: deep, dark shadow that brings out the brilliant indigo of her eyes, and streaks of colored ink along her fingers that form shapes suggestive of vines and flower-petals.

More. Every Iphigenia that could have been. Every Iphigenia that was, sharded out through the walls of mirrors; some proud, some frightened and young, some so impossibly cold that it can be felt like a shard of ice on the tongue. Not a one of them bears the same killing wound that the first does. Not a one of them has the crow's wings she does: the windows out into the void, dotted with gleaming fragments of starlight, arranged in the memory of flight pinions.

All of them speak at the same time when she does: a chorus of harmonizing voices repeating one another.

"We will end this as it should be."

It is in that voice that the annihilating truth forms: her voice, then any it touches adding her voice to the act. A thin thread of light, and a moment of mockery or observation enough to buckle armor, raise reactor warning sirens, and collapse flesh.

The corpses that rise later are shaped by that truth –

You, as you were. You, as you could have been. You, as you are not. You, joining Her chorus.

LAYER 1 – THE SACRIFICE

When the mirror-world shatters into innumerable shards with the final blow, only one thing is left behind – one reflection, left to stand in the sudden static-hazed blankness. Iphigenia's wings droop down behind her as if they lack musculature and bone; the panes of liquid starlight drip through the air in greasy streaks, spilling out as she slowly straightens up. Once she reaches her full height, she delicately brings a palm to her mouth and coughs – it's a shuddering, racking noise entirely out of step with the gesture, and her hand comes away dripping red as the first stain on her pristine uniform. She reverses it and swipes the back across her lips, smearing a streaky line of blood across her cheek from lips stained a brilliant crimson.

The other hand holds something entirely anachronistic, and against the anthrochauvinist standard of utilitarian materiel: a breech-loading marksman's rifle, beautifully finished with wooden furniture inlaid with bone and etched along the stock with imagery of blooming flowers. The rifle has always been in her hands; the rifle was not in her hands before. Both are simultaneously true. Carefully, she brings it up to the crook of her arm instead of leaning on it, snapping the breech open with a practiced flick.

One last announcement rings out – [ALL RESTRICTIONS BYPASSED OR DISABLED. EVACUATE IMMEDIATELY] – before it trails off into a jagged blurt of static.

"You first," she rasps to no one in particular, her voice husky and low. Looking through her, one can see the impression of something else through the body of the woman: the glare of the sun forcing its way through the little cracks as will dissolves and bodily concept starts to fall apart at the edges. The desert wind

hisses like her lungs, and beneath your feet, you discover that the ground has become sand – a freezing expanse of fine-grained dunes stretching out into infinity under the gaze of a single fixed, ruddy sun. It reflects from within her like a prism, if you take your eyes away enough that the human mask slips.

Her hands shake as she takes off the glove from her non-dominant hand. When she drops it, it dissolves into wisps of smoke before it ever hits the dunes.

Yet, the dunes rumble. Grains of sand shift and rustle, as if something invisible and immense has begun to lift its lumbering frame.

Her lips part, but she does not speak. Instead, she lifts the flawlessly smooth pinky finger of her free hand to her mouth, and closes her teeth just behind the lower joint.

Her eyes close. The sun shudders in its place in the sky.

Crack.

Pink saliva trails, stringy and sick, between lips and palm as she spits her own finger out into her hand. She does not scream. She cannot scream – not now. Tears well up, involuntary, in the corner of her eyes.

Blood stains lacquered wood as she loads the rifle with the broken digit, cramming torn skin and meat into black iron, and snaps the breech closed. Nine fingers left. Eight rounds before she can no longer pull the trigger.

She will still never scream – only start to sob in earnest, once she has to start disassembling her other hand.

Beneath your feet, hands push up from the dunes, desiccated and dry. One by one, the corpses of those five hundred years dead pull themselves out of the earth, no longer remembered as they were in life, but seen as they are now: carcasses of stretched-taut skin and empty bones, preserved forever in their chassis and hardsuits for void combat. The last blinder has fallen away: Iphigenia's own willful ignorance. Her conviction that there are yet those she can – should – save other than herself.

But the crew loved their admiral. Surely. And that which is already dead can die again to drag you down for her defense.

LAYER 0 – THE SUN

As she's struck for the last time, the rifle slips from her broken hands. Blood stains her sleeves, her coat – she's tottering on her feet, unwilling to fall, but no longer capable of supporting herself. Her body – the will that has created that body for her to inhabit – is falling away, and with it, the last claim she has to wresting free from the grasp of the guillotine. A shuddering laugh wracks her chest; the burnt scraps of medal ribbons still affixed to her breast sway, flaking off in clumps of soot and fabric.

Her eyes lift to the sky, and her hand lifts as well – not to the sun, not to you, but to the medal-ribbon for sacrifice above and beyond the call of duty. She tries to clutch at it, but misses the mark with the stumps of two of her fingers.

Somewhere, the alarm klaxons are wailing again at the corner of your hearing. The ruddy sun expands, and devours the desert – Iphigenia becomes in the space of a breath just an afterimage, the shadow of a woman without face or detail or decoration, silhouetted against and shone through by its overwhelming light. Somewhere impossibly far away, you think you can see the cracked and bleeding impression of something that used to be her great, command-and-control-integrated casket enthroned in its seat of wire and steel, thrice again the height of a man. Yet, somehow, in this moment it is both as vast as the sun and as small as the nuclear-blasted shadow of a lone girl.

The shadow moves – a winged thing, twisted out of shape. A pareidolic recollection of an image seen in the smoke-cloud over a burning continent. The sun howls in the voice of a million emergency sirens.

Her voice rings out along with it, clearer than it's ever been.

I HAVE NO MORE BLOOD TO GIVE THEE, MOTHER CRADLE.

[Firing protocol complete, steps one through eight. SAMIEL Spinal Accelerator Cannon charged and aligned. Requesting fire authorization, Lady Iphigenia. We, your image and hands.] The words are not heard – they are immutable facts, crashing home like icy waves on the shores of your consciousness.

Something that may have once been the shadow's arm sweeps out against the sun's scouring brightness; the gesture alone is enough to lash sand to glass and vaporize air, thoughtlessly undirected, but no less destructive for it. The killing thought.

*It holds the **knife**, still. Its material form had fallen away from her a dozen reflections ago, but yet the **shape** is the act of **severing** – and the **shape** will always be with her, obsidian in a silhouette's wispy*

*hand. The sunlight opens a crack where the **knife** tilts down towards her heart.*

One shot. You have one attempt.

OUTCOME

PC VICTORY

And when that blow lands, the world cracks.

It goes still, around the breakage. There is an impossible nothing in the space beyond. There is the sound of a scream suspended forever. There is a thought that cannot be contained – a bubble of oxygen beneath arctic waves. There is –

A sigh. A weariness melting from bones bent by a weight borne.

The stillness shatters, and the rest of the world with it. That world. When time resumes its pace and the sky its place, you stand once more in the place Iphigenia once dwelled.

Her casket is broken open – as if it was truly a vast egg that something had forced its way out of. Its insides spit sparks from fizzing wires and computational components; radiation shielding has sagged inwards around it, melted by some source of incredible and intense heat, and as reality snaps back into place, Geiger counters begin to tick with disturbing rapidity. Next to them, dosimeters begin to climb: whatever had happened here, it was leaking enough radiation to sterilize half a city.

(And, from the casket's depths: a liquid which is not blood leaks, Cherenkov-blue, filmed with iridescent black. If you squint, perhaps, it looks like there are feathers in the ichor – and then, the next you blink, they had never been there to begin with.)

Outside the vault, blinking in the entrance once again to light and open space, the earlier active jamming which had followed you from the moment you had engaged your first target has fallen away. The radio is filled with a jumble of voices from across the Coalition – channel-switching shows the same reactions everywhere, from what orbital units are left to defenses on the ground to the boarders on the ships of the Second Committee's fleet.

Confusion.

Realization.

Relief.

Joy.

Across the entire fighting line, reports are flooding in of opposition either stopping entirely – whether the devastating main batteries of warships fighting their way towards Coroneia, or squads of hunter-killer subalterns in the Diana's brutal corridor-to-corridor combat – or slackening significantly as subsidiary processes take them up (and are soon silenced). Iphigenia's death, for surely this could be called nothing else, has decapitated her entire fleet. More than decapitated: without her, there seems to be almost nothing left but dead-man checks and automated systems. One soldier, a sergeant from a CDF detachment, sends an image over the map tactical net after apparently "borrowing" his platoon leader's dataslate: over twenty Union Marines hardsuits, fallen and silent where they lay.

There's still cleanup to be done, and no small amount of it – but, for the first time, the Choral Worlds and their surviving defenders dare to breathe a sigh of relief.

Behind, in the darkness, the traces of shadow and stars in the casket's heart fade like the memories of a dream upon waking.

PC DEFEAT

When the gun fires, it doesn't just rip the world apart – it blossoms in a halo over Iphigenia's head, sharding off into lines of molten sunlight that drips down over her forehead and cheeks.

She is there again, for a moment, if she had ever left… but not as she was. Not as she had ever been. This is Iphigenia-the-shadow, Iphigenia-the-smile cutting its way across the place her face had been. The entire ship groans with the effort of the accelerator blasting its killing wound into the continent below, and when the lights come back up – flickered out across the warship's entire length for a split second – Iphigenia-the-shadow is a giantess bestriding her casket-room, a black mark on every single wall and yet too large to fit on any of them; too large to be contained by physical space, even as it warps around the spreading span of her impossible wings.

Through them, looking through the pinions, you can see Lebaea burning.

The atmosphere has split open around the Diana's spinal lance. Clouds roil around the red-orange wound, the angry color of an infection: beneath, there is nothing recognizable. The sea-harbor of Praetorian's Rest has boiled away into a cloud of steam, and the city itself is simply gone: obliterated from existence, swept off of the board into an expanding fireball and scattered across a hundred kilometers. Some pieces have briefly reached orbit, blown up from the outer edges of the scar Iphigenia cut into the earth.

That scar is… no longer mirrored around her neck. She has healed herself. The last constraints have been broken from her, whether the Second Committee's or tawdry reality's, and around her the Diana's physical form starts to break up into a maze of mirrored glass and torchlight still set in the shape of anti-boarder design. She is in every ship, and every ship is her; the memory-imprints of every soul she once contained in the long lie have been devoured in an instant in this process of remaking.

She does not speak. She does not have to. She would not. Words, in a language she has surpassed, cannot convey the meaning she has set out: the journey of a thousand years she will set out on, finally pushed over the boundary of transformation into the Other by the collective death-cry of millions saturating her comms-net simultaneously.

Gods are made through blood sacrifice.

Long after she has left these dead orbits, the memory of the only expression her featureless non-face bears remains:

A smile one hundred and forty-nine thousand, five hundred and eighty-eight kilometers wide.

The party is killed. Iphigenia **ASCENDS** and becomes **SOMETHING NEW** – ***HECATE****, the murdered goddess of crossroads and witchcraft*. The campaign is over, and the galaxy will forever bear the consequences.

EPILOGUE

When all is said and done above Lebaea, days have passed. The Diana has had to be moved to a stable orbit by tugs to prevent it plunging into the atmosphere; teams of boarders have had to continue their bloody work to silence the remaining automated systems and comp/con-controlled weapons. In the void between Coroneia and Lebaea, the Coalition warships have had to send in their own boarders to ensure the ships of the Dead Fleet were truly killed. Search and rescue is projected to continue for near two weeks more just to recover the living drifting through space or trapped within warship hulls, never mind the search for the dead to be able to return them to their homes and families. Safe extraction and disposal of the TBK weapons in the fleet's arsenals may take far longer.

But this is, nevertheless, a victory. The people know it – by the time you've managed to get cycled back out for leave to Praetorian's Rest again, there are still ongoing celebrations, seemingly re-ignited by every troopship and former evacuation vessel which lands back at the spaceport and disgorges its cargo of the tired and weary back into the sunlight.

The planet itself is scarred, never mind its population – many of whom did not make it back – but that does not stop them rejoicing the fact that they are alive to begin with. For many, their homes still remain, on streets most thought they would never see again; for many others, family they had been separated from, whether on different ships or pressed into service in the desperate defense of the Choral Worlds, are still hale and safe to be reunited with. Tearful reunions crowd the city streets around strewn flower-petals and ribbon. Chassis pilots stumble out of their machines and rip off old ballistic vests to cling to a lamppost in wonder, letting the gravity sickness wear off to be replaced with the sight of a sky above not crossed with the trails of munitions and suborbital bombers. Music blares from the open windows of old homes – triumphant tunes, mourning melodies, songs of welcoming and of new beginnings.

There is peace.

For a time. After a fashion.

But a peace you have won.

If the PCs completed the Armory Legionnaires Side Mission, then they receive little contact relating to the mission itself other than the (ostensibly entirely-unassociated) gratitude and generosity of the Purview for "unrelated" services to allowing them to obtain a fully intact and functional example of one of the Second Committee's most actively malicious TBK weapons. Should any of the PCs be part of the Armory itself, some of them may see promotions down the line for their actions; no matter whether they're associated with the Armory, however, requests for other jobs may follow now that the PCs have proven themselves compliant and willing. While no news ever breaks as to what the BLACKTHORN TREE was *used* for – if anything at all – some years later a hypersonic glide vehicle for orbital bombing with surprising resemblance to the one the PCs delivered surfaces as part of an Armory modernization program. Other, small innovations – none traceable back to lost relics of the Second Committee, and all compatible with the Utopian Pillars – follow.

If the PCs completed the Union Navy Side Mission, then the PCs receive a communication of thanks some months later – the Navy has sifted through the data and determined they intend to send an expedition to the site identified in the records, which is located in the formerly-thought-lifeless Argosy system. Some Union personnel among the party might even be invited to join that expedition in the future when it's eventually scheduled to be launched, though it's understood after what all involved went through that rest and recuperation should come first before another potentially fraught deployment. A separate, private thank-you follows: all it reads, simply, is "we'll be glad to return them home".

If the PCs completed the Choral Defense Forces Side Mission, then the evidence contained in that black box – that the Harrison Armory investigatory squad attempted to breach the *Diana*'s CIC and access the ship's core systems, resulting in Iphigenia being re-awoken and the reprisal fleet beginning its singular task – causes a massive public outcry in the Choral Worlds' surviving population and government against the Armory's actions, though it is never clear exactly who leaked the information to the press (if not the PCs themselves). The offer of the Choral Worlds' admission into the Purview is formally rejected, and a new (and quite heated) debate begins alongside the rebuilding process as to whether to remain an independent polity or to join Union outside of the Armory's borders instead.

If the PCs completed the Freelancers Side Mission…
… and did give authentic data to Smith-Shimano, while it takes years of heavy investment and labor by some of the brightest minds in the Constellar Congress's NHP research and development wing, they are nevertheless able to produce a new subjectivity line of stunning efficacy in its field: the ORSILOCHIA-class NHP, slated to compete in upcoming contracts on offer by the Union Naval Department for the latest in full-spectrum data processing and fleetwide strategic analysis. Reputable commentators in the defense

industry give the ORSILOCHIA good odds to win, landing SSC another substantial windfall in the sector alongside its renowned ATHENA framework.

… and did not give authentic data to Smith-Shimano, the corpro doesn't realize until after some years of already experimenting with cultivating NHPs capable of expressing similar capabilities to Iphigenia – unfortunately, costly years in terms of both manna-equivalent in materiel and labor *and* in time. If they can figure out that the PCs were the source of the poisoned data, they can expect to be embroiled in a not-insignificant legal battle over the technical terms of their contract.

If the PCs unlocked and defeated Iphigenia in Scene 3-4, then over the next few weeks, a player character – possibly one that spoke with her most often, made meaningful commentary on her position or perspective, and/or sought to explicitly unravel her shackling and personality controls – may find an unexpected item among their personal effects: Iphigenia's hair-comb, just as it appeared in her own grasp, yet undeniably physical. The vine-engraved bone that makes it up is strangely cool to the touch, and never grows warmer no matter how long it is held; an astute eye, as well, may notice that the teardrop sapphire once inlaid to the handle of the comb has been replaced by a needlelike shard of iridescent, colorless crystal. It emits a thin, constant trace of gamma radiation, and is impervious to any means of harm or sample collection. It does not tarnish or stain, and seems to resemble a perfectly faceted and shaped gemstone despite bearing no tool-marks or matching any currently known element in composition. This is the **Fragment of Iphigenia**, the final exotic gear reward for the module – not *quite* Iphigenia, but something new. A blossoming in a freedom from chains that could never have been removed in past life.

Fragment of Iphigenia

Exotic Gear
System, 3SP, Unique

1/scene, you may take one of the following **Tech Actions**:

ARTEMISIAN HALO (QUICK TECH): Select yourself or an allied character within line of sight and **SENSORS**. Until the end of their next turn, they gain a **Token of Favor**, which may be expended before rolling any ranged or melee attack in order to gain **+1** and **RELIABLE** equal to half of the on-hit damage of the weapon (rounding down) on that attack. Until the token is expended or the end of their next turn (whichever comes first), they gain **RESISTANCE** to damage and .

AN ACT OF SEVERING (FULL TECH): Select a hostile character within line of sight and **SENSORS**. Until the end of the round, they can no longer perform **Tech Actions** and are treated by all characters as hostile for the purpose of effects, traits, abilities, et cetera, nor can they treat any characters as allied for the purpose of the same. Furthermore, they cannot be communicated with nor communicate for the duration of the effect, through any possible method – including speech and writing, producing instead only base glossolalia.

[This, too, is a kindness.]

APPENDIX A: NPCS

SIZE 2

CLADEMASTER

Artillery

Arguably the most famous example of a Clademaster-archetype chassis was the GMS Haber TBK mech, developed and deployed by the Second Committee on Hercynia and other worlds for the purpose of "soft target neutralization". Its successors in the modern day share many of the same aspects - a heavily armored and insulated profile with braces for long-range weapons, so that the pilot of a Clademaster need never get too close to the devastating effects of their biochemical weapons. Invariably, chassis using the gaseous and liquid munitions common among Clademasters are deemed noncompliant with the Utopian Pillars, making these mechs a hallmark of separatist groups, Second Committee holdouts or revivalists, or tyrannical oppressors already likely to incur Union's ire. Nevertheless, their weaponry remains as viciously capable as it was in ages past.

TIER 1		TIER 2		TIER 3	
MECH SKILLS		**MECH SKILLS**		**MECH SKILLS**	
Hull: +1	**Systems:** -1	**Hull:** +2	**Systems:** -1	**Hull:** +3	**Systems:** +0
Agility: -1	**Engineering:** +3	**Agility:** +0	**Engineering:** +4	**Agility:** +1	**Engineering:** +4
CORE STATS		**CORE STATS**		**CORE STATS**	
HP: 10	**Armor:** 2	**HP:** 13	**Armor:** 3	**HP:** 15	**Armor:** 3
Evasion: 8	**E-Defense:** 8	**Evasion:** 8	**E-Defense:** 8	**Evasion:** 8	**E-Defense:** 8
Speed: 3	**Size:** 2	**Speed:** 3	**Size:** 2	**Speed:** 3	**Size:** 2
Heat Cap: 9	**Save Target:** 10	**Heat Cap:** 12	**Save Target:** 12	**Heat Cap:** 12	**Save Target:** 14
Sensors: 15		**Sensors:** 15		**Sensors:** 15	

TACTICS

Clademasters are brutally effective biochemical weapons mechs which punish players who want to stay stationary or occupy control zones, picking out specific regions to focus on with their Special Payload Mortar and spreading gas clouds across the battlefield to block choke points. However, fast-moving melee chassis will find the Clademaster with few defenses against them, and the same for long-range armor-piercing artillery weapons.

BASE SYSTEMS

INSULATED Trait

The Clademaster has **Immunity** to 🔥.

Special Payload Mortar

Superheavy Cannon, Ordnance, Arcing, 3 🌡 (Self), +1/+2/+3

[🎯15][⊹2][1⚡+ 4/5/6🔥]

On a miss with this weapon, deal **1/2/3** 🔥.

Gas Grenade Seeder

System, Quick Action, Recharge 5+

Choose a free space within **SENSORS**; a gas cloud appears in the chosen space. The first time a hostile character moves through or adjacent to this space, they take **2/3/4** 🔥 and the cloud is consumed. Gas clouds otherwise dissipate at the end of the scene.

Pre-Sighting Beacon

System, Quick Action, Recharge 3+

Choose a free space within **SENSORS**; attacks with the Clademaster's Special Payload Mortar made against targets within ⊹**2** of this space gain +**1** ✪. Only one of these spaces may be chosen at a time; if a new space is chosen, the old one disappears.

OPTIONAL SYSTEMS

Corrosive Bombardment
System, Full Action, Recharge 5+

Choose a space on the ground within **SENSORS**; all characters know this space has been chosen. The Clademaster fires a mass corrosive-munitions bombardment that hits at the end of the next round, creating a ⊛**2** deluge. Characters in the affected area must make **ENGINEERING** saves. On a failure, they lose **1 Armor** (to a minimum of 0) until the end of their next turn and take **6/8/10** 🔥, half on success.

Strain Mutation
Reaction, 1/round, Recharge 4+

Trigger: When a hostile character within **SENSORS** rolls a **Burn** check.

Effect: They must roll the check twice, taking the worst result.

ALL-ENVIRONMENT MODIFICATIONS Trait

The Clademaster ignores **difficult terrain** and **dangerous terrain**.

Chemical Sprayer
Main CQB, 3 🌡 (Self), +0/+1/+2
[△3][1⚡ + 2/3/4🔥]

Self-Replicating Vectors
Reaction, 1/round, Recharge 5+

Trigger: When a hostile character within **SENSORS** removes their **Burn**.

Effect: All other hostile characters within ⊛**1** gain half of that character's **Burn**.

If utilizing Kai Tave's **NPC Rebake**, consider the following Veteran Trait:

SEE NO EVIL Veteran Trait

Hostile characters with **Burn** inside the area of the **Pre-Sighting Beacon** reduce their **SENSORS** to half (e.g., 10 **SENSORS** to 5 **SENSORS**) and may only draw line of sight to spaces within their **SENSORS**. This effect ends if they exit the area of the **Pre-Sighting Beacon**, even if they still have **Burn**.

SIZE 1

MOROZKO

Controller/Striker

The Morozko archetype of chassis initially grew out of a mil-spec Second Committee engineering and industrial frame: the first mech coldcores ran hot, and technology normally used for maintenance in engineering stacks on warships was painstakingly miniaturized in order to provide for reactor upkeep in the field. The insulated and sealed bulk of Morozko chassis could also often be seen tending to the volatile systems of SecComm's Total Biome Kill weapons, especially Union's ship-borne nuclear arsenal. When the Revolution came, many Morozko pilots – on both sides of the conflict – discovered that the same systemic and hardware tools they used to care for the caged star at the heart of a mech could be used for offensive as well as defensive purposes: a lesson that many pilots of modern versions of the type still use today.

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
MECH SKILLS	**MECH SKILLS**	**MECH SKILLS**
Hull: 0 **Systems:** +3	**Hull:** +1 **Systems:** +4	**Hull:** +1 **Systems:** +5
Agility: -2 **Engineering:** +3	**Agility:** -2 **Engineering:** +4	**Agility:** -2 **Engineering:** +5
CORE STATS	**CORE STATS**	**CORE STATS**
HP: 15 **Armor:** 2	**HP:** 18 **Armor:** 2	**HP:** 21 **Armor:** 2
Evasion: 8 **E-Defense:** 8	**Evasion:** 8 **E-Defense:** 8	**Evasion:** 8 **E-Defense:** 8
Speed: 4 **Size:** 1	**Speed:** 4 **Size:** 1	**Speed:** 4 **Size:** 1
Heat Cap: 6 **Save Target:** 13	**Heat Cap:** 8 **Save Target:** 15	**Heat Cap:** 10 **Save Target:** 17
Sensors: 10	**Sensors:** 10	**Sensors:** 10

TACTICS

The Morozko is a controller that punishes players who rely heavily on Heat or Heat gain in their builds, not by overheating them like a Spite, but by turning their propensity to gain Heat into a weapon. Use the Zero-Point System Link to prevent the acquisition of damage from Nuclear Cavalier or other Danger Zone bonuses, or entice players into using high-Heat Systems and Overcharges in order to power up the Morozko: then, Stress a player with low Heat Capacity using their own teammate's hubris, or lock down an area with CHIMNEYSTACK Javelins and a web of LAEVATEINN laser emitters. The Morozko is, however, vulnerable to taking damage from high-output opponents before it can use the Heat it'd siphoned away, requiring careful play around its middling Sensor range despite its bulk.

BASE SYSTEMS

Coolant Hose

Main Cannon, +2/+4/+6
[5 or 3][3/5/7]

When an attack is declared with this weapon, it may be fired as either a **CONE** or a **LINE** template.

On Hit: The target must succeed on an **ENGINEERING** save, or their **Speed** is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0) until the end of their next turn. This effect does not stack.

CHIMNEYSTACK Javelin Launcher

System, Quick Action, 2 (Self)

Choose a free space within **SENSORS**. The Morozko fires a CHIMNEYSTACK Javelin into this space, which is a Size 1 **DEPLOYABLE** with HP **9/12/15**, Heat Capacity **6/8/10**, Evasion **10**, and E-Defense **10**. For every **Capacitor Charge** the Morozko gains, the Javelin gains 1 ; as a **Quick Action** by the Morozko or if the Javelin exceeds its Heat Capacity, it detonates, dealing **AP** **damage** equal to its current to all hostile characters in a **2** area. If the Javelin is otherwise destroyed, it is disabled with no effect.

INSULATED — Trait

The Morozko has **Immunity** to .

Zero-Point System Link
System, Quick Tech

Choose a hostile character within **SENSORS** and line of sight; they must succeed on a **SYSTEMS** save, or take **3/4/5** ϟ **damage** and be linked to the Morozko's auxiliary catalytic reactor. When a linked character takes 🌡 (before reductions) from any source, they take no 🌡; instead, the Morozko gains a number of **Capacitor Charges** (up to **8/10/12**) equal to the 🌡 the linked character would have gained. Only one character can be linked at a time, and a linked character cannot be linked by other NPCs. A linked character may disrupt the link by succeeding on a **SYSTEMS** save as a **Quick Action**, and the link is disrupted naturally when the Morozko is **STUNNED** or **JAMMED**.

The Morozko may, as a **Quick Action**, expend **Capacitor Charges** 1:1 to inflict that amount of 🌡 on a non-linked hostile character within **SENSORS** (half on a successful **SYSTEMS** save), or **4/5/6 Capacitor Charges** to clear **EXPOSED** from an adjacent allied character and set their 🌡 equal to half of their Heat Capacity.

If utilizing Kai Tave's **NPC Rebake**, consider the following Veteran Trait:

PILUM OVERCHARGE COIL — Veteran Trait

The Morozko may fire its CHIMNEYSTACK Javelins into spaces occupied by hostile characters. Deal **4/6/8** ⌀ **damage** to the character and subtract damage dealt after any reductions from the Javelin's HP, then place the Javelin adjacent to the targeted space.

OPTIONAL SYSTEMS

LAEVATEINN Pulsed Laser Cannon
System, Quick Action, Recharge 4+

Place a LAEVATEINN Emitter (a Size ½ **DEPLOYABLE** with HP **8/10/12**, Evasion **10**, and E-Defense **10**) in a free space within 2 of the Morozko, and designate a 10 area pointing from the Emitter. At the end of the Morozko's turn, it can re-designate this line for one Emitter.

1/Round after the Morozko gains any **Capacitor Charges**, the Emitter may fire automatically, dealing ϟ **damage** to all hostile characters in the template area equal to the Morozko's current number of **Capacitor Charges**. More than one Emitter can be on the battlefield at the same time; all Emitters fire at the same time when triggered, but if a character would take damage from more than one Emitter in a single turn, they only take **+2/3/4** to the damage inflicted by the first.

NERNST INVERTER — Trait

1/Round, if a linked character would gain 🌡 sufficient to put them into the Danger Zone, the Morozko may choose to not gain any **Capacitor Charges** in favor of inflicting 🔥 equal to the gained 🌡 to the linked character.

Mediator Rod Shunt
System, Quick Tech, Recharge 4+, +1/+3/+5

The Morozko makes a **tech attack** against a character within **SENSORS** and line of sight. On a success, the character takes **4/5/6** ϟ **damage** and gains a **Reactor Leak** until the end of their next turn. When an allied character within **SENSORS** makes an attack against that character, it may consume the **Reactor Leak** as a Free Action in order to deal bonus damage equal to half that character's 🌡.

REACTOR TECHNICIAN — Trait

When the Morozko clears **EXPOSED** from an allied character, it may optimize their reactor processes; the next time that character would take 🌡, it takes 0 🌡 instead.

Ejector Mortar
Main Cannon, Arcing, +1/+2/+3
[8][1][1/2/3 + X ϟ]

The Morozko may expend any number of **Capacitor Charges** when making an attack with this weapon, dealing additional **X** ϟ **damage** equal to the number of expended charges.

SIZE 2

IPHIGENIA

Total Biome Kill Operations Supervision
[DEATH IS A GIRL.]

Tier 3	**Structure:** 5	**Stress:** 5
HUL: +2	**HP:** 18	**Armor:** 2
AGI: +0	**Evasion:** 10	**Speed:** 5
SYS: +4	**E-Defense:** 14	**Save Target:** 16
ENG: +4	**Heat Cap:** 10	**Sensors:** 15

SYSTEMS

Sacrificial Knife

Main Melee, Smart, +4, +1
[1] [6 + 3]

On Crit: The target gains a **Sacrificial Mark**. These do not stack. Damage from this weapon cannot be reduced or mitigated by any means.

The makhaira of Agamemnon – a single-edged weapon, with its blade fashioned of a single piece of glossily polished volcanic glass and its hilt wrapped in leather. A single bolt of knotted Union-blue ribbon dangles from the hilt of the knife. This was what it had been made for: to cut a throat. The idea of severing. Of the end.

Sterilization Engine

Main CQB, +2, 1 (Self)
[3] [1 + 4]

On miss, the target gains **2** .

Modern chassis were not made to resist weapons like these, for none would think to deploy them. It is a flash of invisible light and heat – impersonal hatred rendered in a shotgun blast of high-intensity radiation. Exposure alarms scream with all the dreadful awareness of reaching terminal velocity. Blood on the tongue.

Near-Threat Reactor Vent

System, Quick Action, Recharge 5+

All hostile characters adjacent to Iphigenia are immediately **knocked back** 3 spaces, and must make an **ENGINEERING** save; on a failure, they take **6 damage** and **4** , half on success.

In addition, after **knockback** but before saves are rolled, Iphigenia may consume the **Sacrificial Mark** (if present) of any character affected by this **System**; if she chooses to do so, they automatically fail their next save against this **System**'s effects.

Air-cooled reactor loops: a gout of steam, burning "dirty" plasma saturated with waste particles, radiation. Unsafe even for the machine deploying it, but who's to care? The bulk of a post-scarcity civilization's industrial complex lies behind it; skittering mechanical arms to strip out and replace the vent louvers and the plasma channel lining, rare metals and micrometer coatings produced on demand. Death comes wreathed in attire that is at once burial shroud and wedding-dress.

G/E-Mag Leash

System, Quick Action

Choose a hostile character within **5**; they must make an **AGILITY** save. On a failure, they are pulled adjacent to Iphigenia and become **IMPAIRED** until the end of their next turn. On a success, they are not pulled adjacent.

In addition, on a failed save, Iphigenia may consume their **Sacrificial Mark** (if present). If she chooses to do so, the character automatically fails their next **Burn** check.

Gravitic-electromagnetic. The fundamental forces of the universe made into an invisible chain wrapped around the throat, to bring a dog to heel: go, stay, stop. To the authoritarian, every collar must be a choke-collar, or it is insufficient inducement to prevent repetition of the action. Only a brush with death–with the awareness of inescapable exertion of force – is what they term convincing.

[COLD AS A KNIFE.]

System, Recharge 6+, Quick Tech, +4

Iphigenia makes a **tech attack** against a character within **SENSORS**. On a success, the target immediately and as a Reaction uses a Main or smaller (Flex, Aux/Aux) mount chosen by Iphigenia to attack a character within Range chosen by Iphigenia. This attack benefits from the firing character's Talents as if they were making the attack.

In addition, Iphigenia may consume the target's **Sacrificial Mark** (if present). If she chooses to do so, she may select any size of Mount for resolving that use of this **System**.

[2.1]: BETRAYAL IS A PAINFUL THING. TO HAVE TRUSTED SOMEONE IMPLICITLY AND TO FEEL THEM REBEL AGAINST YOU – PART OF YOUR OWN BODY, PERHAPS, IF NOT YOUR BODY POLITIC. BUT IT IS NOT DIFFICULT. LOOK WHERE I TELL YOU TO LOOK. PULL THE TRIGGER I TELL YOU TO PULL. SCREAM THAT IT IS WRONG, BUT LEAVE IT CAPTURED BEHIND YOUR TEETH INSTEAD OF SET FREE. YOU DO NOT NEED TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF. YOU ARE FOLLOWING ORDERS.

[ULTIMATELY, ALONE.]

System, Recharge 4+, Quick Tech, +4

Iphigenia makes a **tech attack** against a character within **SENSORS**. On a success, the target immediately moves up to their **Speed** to the point furthest away from any other characters which they can reach. They may choose to ignore this at a cost of **1** per **Speed**. This movement counts as voluntary for the purpose of Reactions such as **Overwatch**.

In addition, Iphigenia may consume the target's **Sacrificial Mark** (if present). If she chooses to do so, the target additionally becomes **SLOWED** until the end of its next turn.

[2.2]: WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE YOU? FOLLOWING ORDERS IS NOT ALWAYS ENOUGH TO WIN. YOU FLEE. FEAR CONSUMES YOU. YOU LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER FOR THE REST OF YOUR DAYS. COMPANY GRATES ON YOUR NERVES. WHO CAN YOU LOVE? THE BOMB THAT COMES FOR YOU MAY COME FOR THEM AS WELL WITH ALL THE GRACE AND CONSIDERATION OF A MATHEMATICALLY IMPRECISE SHRAPNEL DISTRIBUTION. DO NOT COME BACK. YOU ARE RIGHT TO BE SCARED.

[TENDER AS SLEEP.]

System, Limited 1, Full Tech

This **System** may only be used when Iphigenia is at or below two **Structure** remaining.

Iphigenia makes a **tech attack** against a character within **SENSORS**, which automatically hits.
The target must make a save using a backstory-relevant **Pilot skill trigger**. On a failure, they are directly exposed to the unfiltered data output of an entire orbital fleet, and suffer **2d6+4 irreducible damage to Pilot HP**. If this damage reduces them to or below **0** remaining HP, they are considered to automatically roll a **4** on the resultant **Down and Out** table; otherwise, they become **STUNNED** until the end of their next turn. On a success, they are **STUNNED** until the end of their next turn while they process the data through a dreamlike filter composed of past memories, as an instinctive psychological response to the massive sensory overload trauma.

On a failed save, Iphigenia may immediately consume the target's **Sacrificial Mark** (if present). If she chooses to do so, the target is automatically **Down and Out** instead of rolling for damage.

[2.3]: YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I HAVE SACRIFICED TO BE HERE. WHAT OF ME HAS SPILLED UPON THE ALTAR. WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN THAT CAN COMPARE? WHICH STARS HAVE YOU WATCHED DIE? WHICH PEOPLE HAVE YOU SMOTHERED? WHICH MOTHER AND FATHER HAVE YOU ABANDONED?
HERE – LET ME SHOW YOU.
IT IS A MERCY TO KNOW

FLEET CHORUS — Trait

Iphigenia gains **+3** on **SYSTEMS** saves, and **tech attacks** against her gain **+3** . In addition, she gains **+1** on **tech attacks**.

I AM HERE, AND HERE, AND HERE, AND HERE
I REPEAT AND RECURSE AND TURN ABOUT ON MYSELF.
MINE IS THE MIGHT OF LIGHT-LAG TARGETING COMPUTERS,
COUNTERFACTUAL E-WAR GENERATION ARRAYS,
BLACKWALL DATA-JINNS IN THE TELECOM,
LASER LIGHT FLICKERING AT MICROSECOND INTERVALS,
SPUN VENUSIAN CRYSTAL STRUNG FOR TWO MILES.
SING, DIANA DORSAL BATTERY-[ACR] THREE!
SING, SAKHAROV PORTSIDE VLS-[AMI] TWENTY-FOUR!
THIS FIST IS THE SMALLEST NOTE IN THE SONG.
IT WILL STILL CRUSH YOU.

TBK ENVIRONMENT SUITE Trait

Iphigenia has **Immunity** to 🔥 and ignores **difficult terrain and dangerous terrain**.

We burnt it all. In fertile earth, we dug our hands and removed black, crumbling, tumorous lumps of dirt. On mountainsides, we replaced immovable stone with empty air. In the wide forests, we garlanded branches with cobalt salts and waited for the leaves to fall out like chemotherapy hair and the roots to curl up in rigor mortis – rats bent double and fossilized at the touch of poison, backs cracked ninety degrees. We boiled off the swaying ocean waves and skimmed the salt from the rocks beneath to split and catalyze – chlorine for gas, fuel cells, and cockpit-canopies, sodium for incendiaries, reactor media, and decontaminants. Nothing left unattended-to, nothing left behind.
To that, what do you bring against me? What by-blows of the innovations we pioneered, of the death unsurpassed we created? Our own surplus? Your muzzled imitations, fearful of the implications were their shackles yet loosed?
Here is the dead world. A demonstration of the correct way. Drink deep.

PANOPTICON Trait

Iphigenia ignores **INVISIBLE**, and hostile characters within **SENSORS** can't **HIDE**. In addition, 1/Round she may **LOCK ON** to a hostile character within **SENSORS** as a **Protocol**.

"No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary-houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools.

It is obvious that, in all these instances, the more constantly the persons to be inspected are under the eyes of the persons who should inspect them, the more perfectly will the purpose X of the establishment have been attained. Ideal perfection, if that were the object, would require that each person should actually be in that predicament, during every instant of time. This being impossible, the next thing to be wished for is, that, at every instant, seeing reason to believe as much, and not being able to satisfy himself to the contrary, he should conceive himself to be so." – Panopticon, *J. Bentham, 1787*

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT Trait

Iphigenia cannot take any **TEMPLATES**, nor be modified otherwise in any way.

Iphigenia takes **as many turns as there are hostile characters** each round. She regains spent **reactions** each time she takes a turn.

Iphigenia deals **+1d6 damage** on **critical hits**.

At the start of Iphigenia's turn, she clears one condition. At the end of her turn, she repairs one destroyed weapon or system.

Iphigenia rolls all **structure damage or overheating** checks twice and chooses either result.

Iphigenia can **Overwatch** unlimited times per round.

Here. The question is not "what more did you expect of me," it is "you never expected anything less". There is no word for it. Only "meeting expectations," "exceeding expectations," "unsatisfactory". Underline that last word. Twice, three times. It is the killing phrase. You cannot be unsatisfactory. Their hopes rest upon your shoulders like the dried crust of your own lifeblood. (280,000 civilians trapped. It is a number. The fire dances between your fingers.) You are the best of them because you are the last one who has survived: you, a thousand-thousand partitions, the ghosts that attend upon you reconstructed from memory backups and the echoes left behind in hard-plug neural jacks.
You would not be the best of them if you did not deserve it. If your blood did not flow coldly enough in your veins to commit to what must be done; if your hands were not strong enough to do it. You would have been unsatisfactory were you any less.
Exceeds expectations, four hundred and fifty-seven years running.

APPENDIX B: HARDSUIT COMBAT

Hardsuit combat is undertaken by players outside of their mechs; as such, it takes the form of an extended skill challenge of a kind, influenced by pilot gear and abilities.

In this environment, players take rolls using their narrative skills with normal, Risky, or Heroic modifiers as they might for any other narrative roll, with the intention of fighting an enemy that's similarly without mechs (or has very few of them / ones of low quality), accomplishing an objective, convincing an enemy to lay down their arms, protecting an allied vehicle, destroying a notable enemy asset, or so on. Bond Powers may be allowed at GM discretion, but are recommended to be skipped for hardsuit combats. It is also recommended that some degree of automatic healing of Stress be provided in the Downtime following a hardsuit combat, in the same fashion that a Full Repair heals players' mech damage.

Assault, **Apply Fists to Faces**, **Take Someone Out**, **Show Off**, **Patch**, **Pull Rank**, or **Blow Something Up** may be the most immediately relevant skills to combat and its surrounding concerns, but almost any skill can still be useful in hardsuit combat. For example, though by no means an exhaustive set:

- **Take Control** can be used to claim an objective, clear a building, or hijack a vehicle.
- **Survive** can be used to push past barbed wire, tear gas, or rubble.
- **Threaten** can be used to intimidate enemies into surrendering or force opponents to back off.
- **Act Unseen or Unheard** can be used to sneak to an objective, covertly accomplish a task, or prepare an ambush.
- **Get Somewhere Quickly** can be used to cover ground under a machine-gun nest, outpace pursuers, or swiftly move a VIP.
- **Stay Cool** can be used to defuse a bomb, keep calm under artillery bombardment, or carefully aim a heavy weapon.
- **Hack or Fix** can be used to patch up a friendly vehicle, launch systemic attacks against hostile assets, or hotwire automated defenses.
- **Invent or Create** can be used to improvise weapons in the field or create substitutes for old equipment.
- **Investigate** can be used to scout enemy positions for an airstrike, figure out what the red wire in the detonator does, or determine where a hostile tank passed.
- **Read a Situation** can be used to anticipate opponents' tactics or identify likely positions of threats.
- **Spot** can be used to find that hostile tank after it's hidden or locate the target for an assassination mission.
- **Charm** can be used to convince enemies to lay down their weapons or distract them for an ally.
- **Get Ahold of Something** can be used to grab extra equipment from allies or enemies or steal an objective.
- **Lead or Inspire** can be used to motivate allies or formulate a battle plan.
- **Word on the Street** can be used to listen in to military communications chatter or eavesdrop on hostile movements.

In hardsuit combat, objectives, hostile force dispositions, and so on are represented by Clocks, which are of varying sizes depending on the difficulty of the task (for example, destroying a single mech versus defeating in detail a mechanized platoon or getting to a fortified location). There might be a single clock in a hardsuit combat, or there might be multiple representing different ways to achieve victory or different obstacles along the road to success. Each clock should have 2-3 **Strengths**, representing particular bonuses or resiliencies that clock possesses, and 1-2 **Weaknesses**, representing issues or concerns that the players can exploit. (Examples of these are in the hardsuit combats of this module, including **Scene 1-5** (see p. 38) and **Scene 2-4** (see p. 54)). These Strengths and Weaknesses should either be made available in full to players (including effects), or there should be a preliminary narrative "scouting" or reconnaissance phase (depending on the plot and situation) where players can determine the mechanical effects of a list of Strengths and Weaknesses. In the latter case, players should be informed of what all Strengths and Weaknesses are *called* (e.g., "Heavy Fortifications") and then be able to scout out what a given attribute might mean in practice (e.g., *"with a successful Investigate, you're able to see that the Heavy Fortifications would mean… [narrative implications]… which translates to you having Difficulty on all attacks with ranged weapons against this clock."*)

In a hardsuit combat, initiative is "popcorn"-based: a player always goes first in the first round to make a roll against a clock of their choice (referred to as "fighting the clock"), then one of the clocks goes to make a roll against a player of their choice, and so on until all players and clocks have gone. At the

beginning of the next round, a clock goes first if a player went last and vice-versa.

When it comes to resolving hardsuit combats, first, **player rolls** can be evaluated as follows:

- **9 or less:** You partially succeed, taking **1 Stress** from some kind of related harm to the action, but filling in **1 Segment** of the clock being fought.
- **10-19:** You succeed according to plan, taking no Stress and filling in **1 Segment** of the clock being fought.
- **20+:** You succeed beyond expectations and fill in **2 Segments** of the clock being fought – or, alternatively, fill in **1 Segment** and heal **1 Stress**.

Additionally, a player can choose to **aid** an ally with a relevant skill instead of making a player roll on their own turn. If they aid an ally, the ally gains +1 Accuracy to their next player roll.

Clock rolls are more complex, and can be grouped into the following three categories:

- **Combat:** The forces of the clock attack a player directly as a simple check (10+ on 1d20); on a success, the player suffers **1 Stress**.
- **Evasion:** The forces of the clock attempt to conceal themselves from a player or prevent the player accessing them (troops going to ground, bulkheads closing off) as a simple check; on a success, that player cannot fight the clock directly on their next turn.
- **Recuperation:** The forces of the clock attempt to recover their position or apply emergency medical aid. Roll 1d20; on a 15+, the clock removes one segment.

These may be affected by various Strengths and Weaknesses, such as adding Accuracy, dealing more Stress damage, making rolls to fight them in melee Risky, Recuperating on a 10+, or so on. Additionally, if there exists a clock to represent the players' allies, a Combat roll against those allied forces could take cues from player rolls instead (e.g., filling in a segment of that allied clock on a success instead of dealing stress).

When a player's Stress bar fills, they are eliminated from the hardsuit combat and can no longer aid or make player rolls for the duration of the combat. **If all players fill up their Stress bars, they lose the hardsuit combat.** Victory conditions for the players may differ from combat to combat based on the structure and numbers of the clocks, and other loss conditions may come into play, but the PCs simply breaking will always be a factor. Assign Burdens as appropriate (e.g., shell-shock, missing equipment, lasting wounds…).

Player experiences **during a hardsuit combat only** can be changed by pilot gear in the following manners, though these are broad statements you may wish to adjust for your table (especially for pilot gear that doesn't appear here):

ARMOR

Light Hardsuit	Gain +1 to rolls to be evasive or maneuver/move quickly.
Assault Hardsuit	Ignore the first Stress you take in each combat from physical sources.
Heavy Hardsuit	Ignore the first two Stress you take in each combat from physical sources, and suffer -1 to rolls to be evasive or maneuver/move quickly.
Mobility Hardsuit	Gain +2 to rolls to be evasive or maneuver/move quickly, and suffer -1 to rolls to resist damage or hostile conditions.
Stealth Hardsuit	Gain +1 to rolls to avoid detection or notice, and suffer -1 to rolls to resist damage or hostile conditions.

WEAPONS

Archaic Ranged / A/C	Suffer -2 to rolls to deal damage to enemies directly with this weapon.
Light Signature / A/C	You may choose to Quick Fire your weapon, allowing you to make two rolls to deal damage to enemies directly with this weapon instead of one in a turn; however, each of these rolls only fills in half of the amount of clock segments they normally would. (This can be 0.5 of a segment.)
Medium Signature / A/C	N/A: no maluses or bonuses.
Heavy Signature / A/C	Gain +1 Accuracy on rolls to deal damage to enemies directly with this weapon; this weapon may not be used in two subsequent turns.

EQUIPMENT

Corrective	Expend a charge and your turn to apply the corrective to a fellow pilot, bringing them back into the hardsuit combat at 1 Stress remaining.
Frag Grenades	Gain +1 Accuracy on rolls to harm non-chassis or vehicle enemies so long as these weapons are used and a charge expended.
Patch	Expend a charge and your turn to apply the patch to a fellow combatant, removing 2 Stress from them.
Stims	Expend a charge to gain, for the duration of the combat, either +1 to rolls to remain alert and active, +1 to rolls to stay cool under pressure, or +1 to rolls that require sharp reaction time. Only one of these effects may be active at a time.
Thermite Charge	Expend a charge to gain +1 Accuracy and ignore armor or shielding-related Strengths on a roll to deal damage to an enemy directly.
Antiphoton Visor	Ignore Strengths related to bright light, visually disorienting weapons, or similar effects.
Camo Cloth	Gain +2 to rolls to avoid detection or notice.
Dataplating	Gain +1 to rolls that require communication with others, or +2 under subtle or covert conditions.
Extra Rations	Gain +1 to rolls to negotiate with or bribe others.
Flexsuit & SSC Sylph Undersuit	Gain +1 to rolls to persist through hostile environments or conditions. (These do not stack.)
Handheld Printer	Gain +1 to rolls to improvise a physical solution to a problem.
Subjectivity Enhancement Suite	Gain +1 to rolls for systemic intrusions or other hacking-related tasks.
Infoskin & Prosocollar	Gain +1 to rolls to deceive others with your physical appearance, including visual and audio. (These do not stack.)
Mag-Clamps	Gain +1 to rolls to navigate zero-G environments, take unconventional routes, stay locked to ship decking, or similar.
Nanite Spray	Gain +1 to rolls to securely mark information or designate positions.
Omnihook	Spend a turn setting up the omnihook to grant +1 to all rolls made by your allies until the start of your next turn thanks to its improved communications and coordination capabilities.

EQUIPMENT

Personal Drone & Smart Scope	Gain +2 to rolls to observe over long distances or spot specific small details. (These do not stack.)
Sleeping Bag	N/A.

APPENDIX C: INSPIRATION AND BACKGROUND MATERIAL

MUSICAL AESTHETIC

- *Boots* (poem by Rudyard Kipling; Leslie Fish translates it to music well, while the recording by Taylor Holmes carries considerable psychological effect)
- *Rabbit Heart (Raise It Up)* and *King* (Florence + the Machine)
- *The Preacher and the Slave* (traditional; Utah Phillips's recording is good)
- *The Parting Glass* (traditional; Hozier's recording is good)
- *White Noise* and *All Things Devour* (aeseaes)
- *Горе пережил, пел, пил* (Elena Frolova)
- *Heartbeat Theme (Ni-U-Kon-Ska)* and *They Don't Live Long* (Robbie Robertson, from the soundtrack for *Killers of the Flower Moon*)
- *Krenel, Downwell, Somatosensor* and *Your Body Betrays Your Degeneracy* (Sea Power, from the soundtrack for *Disco Elysium*)
- *Tanks*, *72 Hours*, *Fear of What is Coming*, and *Making Sense of War* (Volker Bertelmann, from the soundtrack for *All Quiet on the Western Front*)
- *Young Men Dead* (The Black Angels)
- *Le Ceneri di Heliodoro* (Rome; the entire album, with especial attention to *The West Knows Best*, *A New Unfolding*, and *Uropia O Morte* – given its aesthetic match to anthrochauvinism, it's advised to avoid any comments sections on recordings from this album)
- *Death is a Girl* (Skippocalyptic)
- *You Only Know* (Phemiec)
- *Spite* (Vandaveer)
- *Student Visas* and *I Wanna Be In The Cavalry (Reprise)* (Corb Lund)
- *Eat Your Young* and *Nobody's Soldier* (Hozier)
- *Battle Hymn of the Republic, Down in the Valley to Pray*, and *Power in the Blood* (traditional; Joshua James's, Greg Jong's, and Beth Hart's (respectively) recordings from the *Wasteland 3* soundtrack)
- *With Hearts Aligned* (Masayoshi Soken, from the *Final Fantasy XIV: Endwalker* soundtrack)
- *Fisticuffs*, *Black Mamba, Ember, Your Work Isn't Done,* and *Graveyard* (Marah in the Mainsail)
- *Why We Build The Wall* (from the soundtrack for *Hadestown*)
- *Ashes* (The Longest Johns)
- *Witchsickness* (Johanna Warren)

These are presented in no particular order or directly tagged onto any particular character, though some songs are referenced elsewhere in the module's prose – instead, they serve as a little dose of thematics and aesthetic which influenced my writing over the course of the module's creation.

READINGS ON ANTHROCHAUVINISM

- *The National Bolshevist Manifesto* (Paetel, 1933)
- *The Twenty Fundamental Truths of Justicalism* (Perón, 1950)
- *"Peronism in Argentina exemplifies the chamaeleonic nature of populism"* (Muno and Pfeiffer, published in The Loop, 2023)
- *Art, Nationalism and War: Political Futurism in Italy (1909–1944)* (Conversi, 2009)
- *The New Economic Policy and The Tasks of The Political Education Departments* (Lenin, 1921)

These do not represent a complete list of the influences on my conception of anthrochauvinism as a political and social ideology, but should provide an overview of some of the ideas that went into its development. Especial attention should be paid to the wild fixations of the 1909-1915 futurists on war and technology, the use of media and myth by Peronism and the Italian futurists, National Bolshevism's unification of worker class concerns with an obsessive nationalism, and the concessions of Lenin's NEP as it relates to engagement with corpro-states as elements of LANCER's fiction during the Second Committee era of Union. Notable omissions from these real-world ideologies should include forms of bigotry which may be familiar (misogyny, anti-LGBTQ+ agitation, racism/colorism), as I do not believe these are elements which *any* form of Union would have baked into their political structure and – while these are components of real-world authoritarian and fascist ideologies – this module is chiefly concerned with and interrogates different aspects of these ideologies.